Merry Xmas
to Herbert
from Russell
1928

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

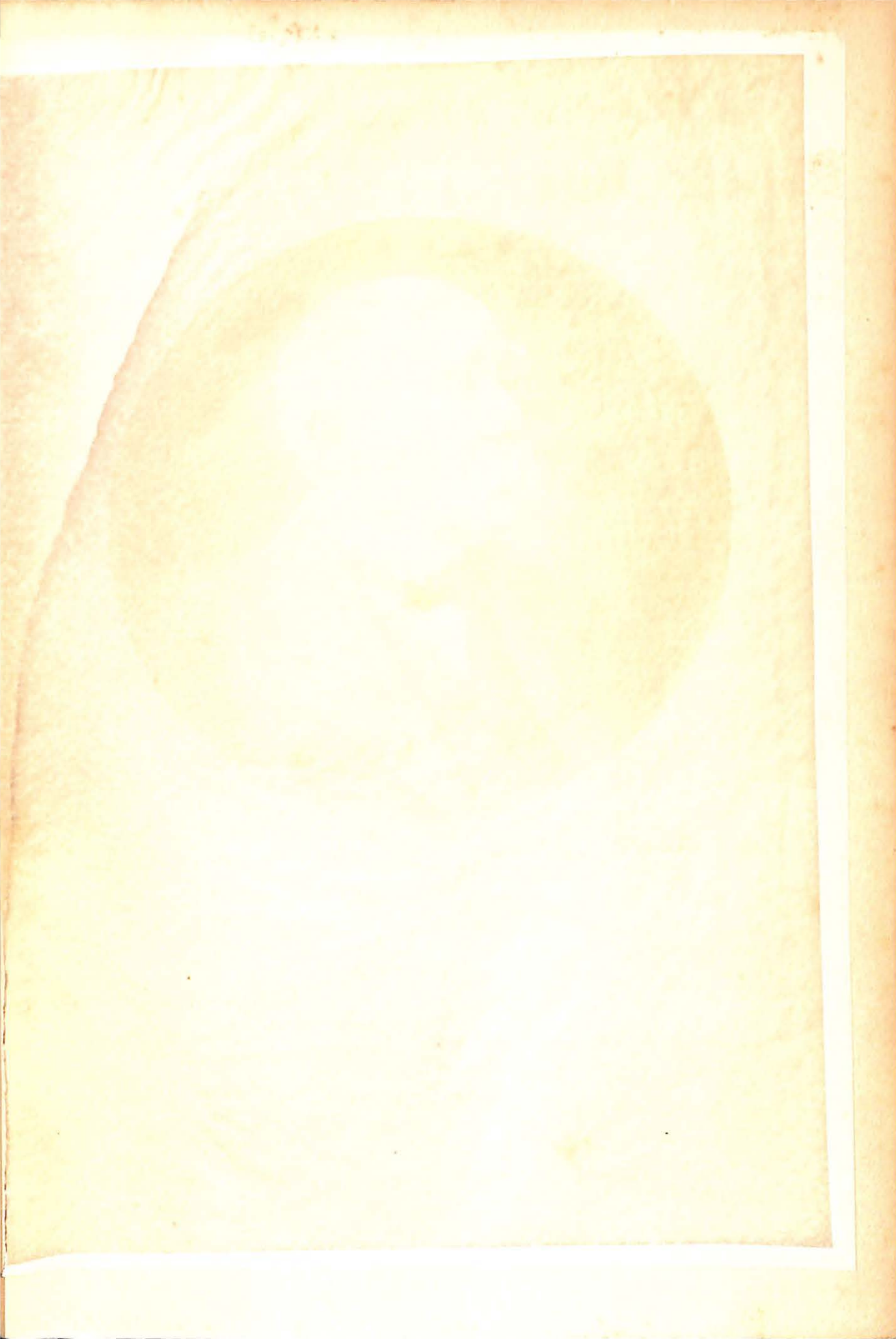
The Ending of the War

June, 1918 — August, 1919

'The war itself was like no other. . . . The peace, in turn, should have taken a new path. . . . It was an opportunity for sacrifice . . . which surely, later, would have garnered rich returns for all.'

Colonel House, April 9, 1928

au Colonel House et à Mme House
leur ami reconnaissant
Clemenceau



THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

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The Ending of the War

Arranged as a Narrative

BY

CHARLES SEYMOUR

Provost and Sterling Professor of History, Yale University

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1928

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The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A

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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE

JUNE, 1918 — NOVEMBER, 1919

CHAPTER I

ANTECEDENTS OF THE COVENANT

My own conviction, as you know, is that the administrative *constitution* of the League must grow and not be made.

President Wilson to Colonel House, March 22, 1918

I

THE summer of 1918 witnessed the turn of the military tide, the final collapse of the German offensive in France, and the triumphant counter-offensive of the Allied armies under the coördinating direction of Foch. It was natural that during the same period preparations for harvesting the results of the impending military victory should be hastened. Few guessed how close that victory was, but there was an instinctive crystallization of plans for the peace. In France, Great Britain, and the United States the committees which had long been at work gathering data for the Peace Conference, began to put the results of their studies into comparatively definite and final form.

At the same time there were drafted the first official schemes for an association of nations. In France and Great Britain, Government committees sketched tentative constitutions for such an association, and in the United States President Wilson asked Colonel House to undertake a similar task.

The enthusiastic emphasis which Wilson placed upon a League of Nations as the keystone of a just and abiding

peace settlement was progressive, for the President was more cautious than many of his compatriots in approving the principle. So early as 1914, however, the essence of Article X of the Covenant was in his mind. On December 16 of that year, he discussed with Colonel House the possibility of introducing a direct guarantee for the preservation of peace in the Americas. He was planning at that time the negotiation of a general Pan-American Pact, and wrote out on his own typewriter, as the basic formula of such a convention, the words: 'Mutual guaranties of political independence under republican form of government and mutual guaranties of territorial integrity.' [1] The negotiations for this Pan-American Pact, continuing through 1915 and 1916, were never completed, partly because of the diplomatic crises with the European belligerents which distracted Wilson from concentrating upon American affairs. But the President kept always in mind the principle of international association he then formulated, and the words 'political independence' and 'territorial integrity' bit deep into his consciousness.

These very crises with the European states shook him loose from any sense of isolation and impressed upon him the rôle which the United States might play in an association not merely American, but world-wide in its character. Colonel House's fruitless mission in 1914 for the furtherance of a general agreement between the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany, had in it the germ of a League of Nations; in August, 1914, House laid before Wilson his belief that if such an agreement had been in existence at the time of the Serajevo murders the war might have been prevented.[2]

[1] See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, I, 209–10.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 275: 'I believed if we had had an opportunity to put this [a League of Nations] into effect, in all human probability such a war as this would not have occurred. . . .'

It was natural that the President should combine the idea of House's 1914 mission with that of the Pan-American Pact: the principle of American interest in world peace with the method of an association to guarantee it. He seems to have studied carefully the letters which Sir Edward Grey wrote to House and which the latter forwarded to the President; in them the British Foreign Secretary emphasized ceaselessly his belief that the future peace of the world depended upon a general and permanent conference of the nations, the substitution of international organization in place of the existing anarchy, international concert instead of national individualism. The effect of these letters upon Wilson was evidently decisive, for when he finally made up his mind, in May, 1916, openly to announce his adherence to the principle of a League of Nations, he asked House to furnish him with materials based upon this correspondence.[1] His speech of May 27, 1916, before the League to Enforce Peace, which outlined his entire foreign policy for the succeeding four years, echoed and emphasized the principle of the Grey-House discussions.[2]

After May, 1916, Wilson became the enthusiastic champion of the League of Nations idea, which he set forth, although in the most general terms, in each of his important addresses on foreign policy. In his notes of December 18 of that year, suggesting that the belligerents state their peace conditions, he intimated that 'a concert of nations immediately practicable' was the chief purpose of the settlement. In his speech of January 22, 1917, he spoke of a 'covenant of

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 296. The President wrote to House: I am thinking a great deal about the speech I am to make on the twenty-seventh, because I realize that it may be the most important I shall ever be called upon to make. . . . Would you do me the favour to formulate what you would say, in my place, if you were seeking to make the proposal as nearly what you deem Grey and his colleagues to have agreed upon in principle as it is possible to make it when concretely formulated as a proposal? Wilson to House, May 18, 1916.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 337.

coöperative peace,' of a 'concert of power,' which should replace the entangling alliances of the past. The speech of the Fourteen Points, January 8, 1918, culminated in his insistence upon a 'general association of nations,' which 'must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.'

It is clear that President Wilson came to the endorsement of a league of nations by gradual steps. It is equally clear that he was slow to formulate his ideas as to the exact kind of league that was desirable. His biographer, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, in discussing the documents relating to the drafting of the Covenant, has written: 'One fact arises above all others in studying these interesting documents: practically nothing — not a single idea — in the Covenant of the League was original with the President. His relation to it was mainly that of editor or compiler, selecting or rejecting, recasting or combining the projects that came in to him from other sources. He had two great central and basic convictions: that a league of nations was necessary; that it might be brought into immediate existence. In voicing these he felt himself only a mouthpiece of the people of the world.' [1]

The President waited long before proceeding to anything like a draft of the framework of the proposed League. It does not appear that he studied seriously the programme of the League to Enforce Peace, nor the plans of Elihu Root which emphasized the principle of a World Court, although without the educational accomplishments of such advocates of the League idea, it is unlikely that even the later leadership of Wilson himself would have greatly availed. It is true that he was destined to incorporate many of their ideas in his own plan, but he did not ask for nor did he accept their cooperation. He was determined to keep the control of the

[1] Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* (Doubleday, Page & Co.), I, 214.

movement in his own hands and he did not wish to be hurried. In the mean time he left it to House to collect and analyze opinions. Sir William Wiseman later commented as follows upon Colonel House's interest in early plans for the League:

'From the time that I first met House up to the Peace Conference, he was always anxious to hear all shades of opinion regarding the League of Nations, and the type of Covenant upon which it should be based. He would listen to any one who had studied the matter earnestly, whether they were enthusiastic advocates or bitter opponents. He sought the views of conservatives such as Root, of distinguished soldiers and sailors, labour leaders, pronounced pacifists, and extreme socialists. He did not by any means confine his enquiries to American opinion, but tried to get the views of thoughtful men in every country. Busily occupied with many other urgent matters, he asked me and one or two other trusted friends to gather opinions regarding the League. In this way, House was able to give Wilson a very fair summary of world opinion about the Covenant so far as it was developed at that time. It was very doubtful at the time that the United States came into the war whether the Government of any other country would agree to make the League a part of the Peace Treaty. The Allied Governments particularly were so engrossed in the prosecution of the war that they had neither the time nor the inclination seriously to consider the League Covenant as part of the Peace Treaty.'

During the year 1917 the President's mind was concentrated upon the conduct of the war, and he thought of the peace settlement only in the most general terms. As he said himself, he had a 'one-track mind,' and it was for this reason that he turned over to House, in September, 1917, the task of gathering material for the Peace Conference. None of his

letters to House at this time regarding the future settlement discuss any details of a League, and he was evidently content to let the Colonel's organization do the spadework in its own way. House's enthusiasm for the principle of the League was well known in England, where he had discussed it frequently in 1915 and 1916 with Sir Edward Grey. In September, 1917, Lord Robert Cecil wrote to him suggesting that the time had come to appoint a commission to study feasible plans. Cecil was already recognized with Grey as among the most distinguished advocates of a League in Great Britain; he was destined to play an outstanding part in its creation.[1]

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, *September* 3, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I have ventured to send to you, by Sir William Wiseman, a copy of a memorandum I prepared for the Government here in September, 1916, dealing with a particular proposal for diminishing the likelihood of war. I should be very grateful to you if you could find time to read it. . . .

That we ought to make some real effort to establish a peace machinery when this war is over, I have no doubt; and I have very little doubt that an attempt of that kind will be made. One danger seems to me to be that too much will be aimed at. In the present state of public opinion in Europe, I am very much afraid that, if anything like a complete system for the judicial or quasi-judicial settlement of international disputes be aimed at, it will infallibly break down and throw the movement back for many years. Nothing did more harm to the cause of peace than the breakdown of the efforts after

[1] President Wilson has often been criticized for entrusting matters of importance to a private citizen, such as House, who did not occupy an official position. Much of House's influence was due, as is indicated by this and other letters, to the confidence placed in him by European statesmen.

Waterloo in this direction. It is now generally forgotten that the Holy Alliance was originally started as a League to Enforce Peace. Unfortunately, it allowed its energies to be diverted in such a way that it really became a League to uphold tyranny, with the consequence that it was generally discredited, besides doing infinite harm in other ways. That particular danger is perhaps not great now-a-days, but the example shows how easily the best intended scheme may come to grief.

People here have suggested to me that it might be worth while if in America, and perhaps in this country also, some Commission of learned and distinguished men were entrusted with the duty of examining all these schemes, in order to see what was possible and useful. I am not myself a very great admirer or believer in Commissions of any kind, but I should be very glad if some machinery could be hit on which would direct some of our best brains to the consideration of this problem.

Again, thanking you, believe me, with very sincere respect

Yours very truly

ROBERT CECIL

President Wilson, when House brought this letter to his attention, decided that there was no need of appointing a special committee, since the task of examining the various schemes for a league could be undertaken by the Inquiry as a part of its activities in gathering data for the Peace Conference. While these studies were in process, he wished to prevent public discussion of the constitution of a league by irresponsible writers, who he feared would be stimulated to fantastic proposals. As he wrote to House: We must head them off, one way or another. He dreaded especially 'that they insist upon a discussion now of the *constitution* of the league of nations.' He spoke of some of the American advo-

cates of a league as 'woolgatherers,' and of the plans of others as 'folly.' [1]

Thus during the winter of 1917–18 no official steps were taken to institute public discussion that might crystallize opinion upon the character of the proposed league. The President did not wish to take his mind from war problems so as to study details of a league, nor did he wish to have a programme formulated which he might later have to oppose. But after the speech of the Fourteen Points, the demand for the formulation of an official plan became stronger. Realizing that the leadership of the movement might pass into unofficial hands, President Wilson commissioned House to discuss the elements of a league with the most eminent of its American advocates. During January and February, House entered into conference with Mr. Taft, Mr. Root, and Mr. Butler, and later exchanged letters with President Lowell of Harvard. 'I have been working fitfully for some time,' he wrote Wilson, on February 19, 'trying to get the Carnegie peace group to coöperate with those that believe in a league to enforce peace.'

In the mean time the British Government, largely under the stimulus of Lord Robert Cecil, had taken definite steps in the direction of serious study, by the appointment of a committee authorized to report upon schemes for the avoidance of war. The advocates of a league in Great Britain urged again that the United States Government manifest a willingness to coöperate.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, *February* 16, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I write to you because I know that you have been specially charged by the President with the superintendence of all

[1] Wilson to House, March 20, 1918.

questions which need preparation in connection with the Peace Conference.

I think you will agree with me that the 'League of Nations' will be one of these questions, and we have therefore appointed a Committee to enquire, particularly from a juridical and historical point of view, into the various schemes for establishing, by means of a league of nations or other device, some alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes, to report on their practicability, to suggest amendments, or to elaborate a further scheme if on consideration it should be deemed possible and expedient.

We do not at present intend to publish the fact of the formation of this Committee. The Chairman is Sir Walter Phillimore, lately Lord Justice of Appeal, and a well-known authority on International Law, and the author of a recent work entitled 'Three Centuries of Treaties of Peace,' a copy of which I hope you will accept from me.

I do not know whether your staff is also engaged on a similar task, but if they are it has occurred to me that if we could establish coöperation it would be a mutual benefit to us. If you share this view would you be inclined to let me know, for our confidential information, the lines on which you are working and I will undertake to keep you similarly informed?

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

To this House was compelled to reply that it was impossible as yet to establish practical coöperation with the British, since American studies had not proceeded sufficiently far. At the same time he reported to President Wilson upon the increasing demand that some step should be taken by the President to advance the League idea. On March 8 he warned him of the suggestion of Lord Bryce to American advocates of a league, that if the President still hesitated to appoint a commission, one should be self-constituted. 'It

seems to me,' wrote House to Wilson, 'that a committee might be formed over here, not with Government sanction but with its tacit approval, to work out plans which might be used as suggestions at the Peace Conference. Further than this I do not think it would be wise to go, and yet public opinion is driving so hard in this direction that I doubt if it would be wise to do less.'

The President refused to agree that such a commission was necessary. He none the less encouraged House to continue his discussions with American supporters of the League idea, and during the following weeks House gathered and tabulated the opinions of its leading advocates.

President A. Lawrence Lowell to Colonel House

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
March 13, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I am afraid that I did not make the object of my last letter clear. I had no idea of proposing that the Entente Powers should start during the war a League of Nations with the hope of getting the Central Powers and the Neutrals to join later; and if the first paragraph of the draft I sent you gave that impression it certainly was not so intended. In deference to some English opinion, this first paragraph was drawn so as to provide that the League, when formed at the close of the war, should consist *prima facie* of the Entente Powers; but I think it would be better to change it so that any of the Central Powers that were admitted would be admitted as primary members on the formation of the League. A plan for an immediate League has been proposed by some members of our organization, but I have always opposed it.

Last night I was talking with the Archbishop of York, and the ideas of his group and ours in the League to Enforce Peace seem to agree very closely. He tells me that he is to see you again before he sails.

I sent you the extract from Lord Bryce's letter because he thought it would be better to have a joint commission appointed by the Governments of the two countries. As you are virtually such a commission on the part of our Government, I want to coördinate the work of the League to Enforce Peace with yours. I gathered from your letter that you think it is better not to have a governmental joint commission, but to have plans made independently, though keeping in touch with one another.

The essential point in the plan we are drawing up in the League to Enforce Peace is that the executive authority of the League, so far as executive action is needed, should be in the hands of the rulers, or the direct representatives of the rulers, of the Governments whose action in matters of peace and war will be decisive. The experience of the English House of Lords shows that a body, however great the personal distinction of its members may be, cannot have any considerable authority if it does not represent political forces.

The plan also provides for a position in the League of small permanently neutral states, which I believe necessary for their preservation and for a state of peace.

I should be glad if you would make any suggestions to keep us in touch with your work.

Very truly yours

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *March* 21, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter from Lawrence Lowell. I do not think there will be any difficulty in getting the League to Enforce Peace people to do anything you desire. . . .

The only thing I have suggested is that they unofficially

and independently formulate their ideas from time to time, so that when the Peace Conference comes you may have the benefit of their thoughts. . . .

The Archbishop of York is to take lunch with me on April 11 and I had thought to ask Mr. Taft, Lowell, and Root to join us. Root, as you know, belongs to a different group. His is the 'World Court.' He too expresses a desire to conform to your wishes. If I get them all together I believe I can bring about a definite understanding. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

Mr. Wilson was still decidedly averse from any policy that involved the formulation of a concrete albeit tentative constitution for a league. Such a constitution, he believed, must not be cut out of whole cloth; it must grow and not be made. He approved, however, House's suggestion of a luncheon conference with Taft, Lowell, and Root, and expressed his belief that it was 'most wise and should be most helpful.' [1] House also invited Mr. Lansing, who could not accept because of pressure of work in Washington. The Secretary of State was conscious of serious doubts as to the value of a league for the prevention of war. As he wrote to House, his chief preoccupation was the necessity of destroying completely the military power of Germany and the establishment of the democratic principle throughout the world. This, he believed, offered the most certain guarantee of permanent peace.

Secretary Lansing to Colonel House

Washington, *April* 8, 1918

My dear Colonel:

Mr. Auchincloss gave me your invitation for luncheon on Friday next and I am sorry I cannot accept it. I concluded

[1] Wilson to House, March 22, 1918.

from what he said that the purpose was to discuss the American and British differences as to the League of Nations, and particularly the attitude of Lloyd George as expressed in his public address about a month ago.[1]

As you probably know, Mr. Page wrote a long letter to the President on the subject. He sent a similar one to me, which I found very interesting in its dissection of British opinion.

To be entirely frank I am not disposed to quarrel too severely with the Prime Minister's opinion in regard to the League to Enforce Peace, because I am not at all sure he is not in a measure justified. The movement has been for several years very industriously and, I may say, very ably advocated in this country; but, doubting its efficiency as a means to insure international peace, I have, as you know, never affirmatively given it my personal support.

The practical element, in my opinion, in any league of nations is the good faith of the members. If they are untrustworthy, an agreement to unite in the forcible maintenance of peace would be worthless. If this is the true view, the character of the membership of the league should be of first consideration, and I do not understand this to be in the scheme of Mr. Taft and others advocating a League to Enforce Peace.

Briefly let me recall to you my line of thought, which I discussed with you a year and a quarter ago: No people on earth desire war, particularly an aggressive war. If the people can exercise their will, they will remain at peace. If a nation possesses democratic institutions, the popular will will be exercised. Consequently, if the principle of democracy

[1] A speech delivered by Mr. Lloyd George at the Free Churches, March 13, 1918. In this, replying to the criticism that he had not given sufficient prominence to the League of Nations, he stated that too much confidence must not be placed in phrases and that the 'true apostles of the League of Nations' were the 'millions of young men . . . in battle array. If they succeed . . . the League of Nations will be an established fact.'

prevails in a nation, it can be counted upon to preserve peace and oppose war.

Applying these truths (if they are truths and I think they are), I have reached the conclusion that the only certain guarantor of international peace is a League of Democracies, since they alone possess the trustworthy character which makes their word inviolate. A League, on the other hand, which numbers among its members autocratic governments, possesses the elements of personal ambition, of intrigue and discord, which are the seeds of future wars.

A League, composed of both democratic and autocratic governments and pledged to maintain peace by force, would be unreliable; but a League, composed solely of democracies, would by reason of the character of its membership be an efficient surety of peace.

To my mind it comes down to this, that the acceptance of the principle of democracy by all the chief powers of the world and the maintenance of genuine democratic governments would result in permanent peace. If this view is correct, then the effort should be to make democracy universal. With that accomplished I do not care a rap whether there is a treaty to preserve peace or not. I am willing to rely on the pacific spirit of democracies to accomplish the desirable relation between nations, and I do not believe that any League relying upon force or the menace of force can accomplish that purpose, at least for any length of time.

Until Autocracy is entirely discredited and Democracy becomes not only the dominant but the practically universal principle in the political systems of the world, I fear a League of Nations, particularly one purposing to employ force, would not function.

It seems to me that the proper course, the one which will really count in the end, is to exert all our efforts toward the establishment of the democratic principle in every country of sufficient power to be a menace to world peace in the event

it should be in the hands of ambitious rulers instead of the people. Unless we can accomplish this, this war will, in my opinion, have been fought in vain.

We must crush Prussianism so completely that it can never rise again, and we must end autocracy in every other nation as well. A compromise with this principle of government, and an attempt to form a League of Nations with autocratic governments as members will lack permanency. Let us uproot the whole miserable system and have done with it.

In reading over this letter it impresses me as a little too oratorical, but I am sure you will pardon that in view of the strong convictions which I have on the subject. I simply cannot think with complacency of temporizing or compromising with the ruffians who brought on this horror, because to do so will get us nowhere, and some future generation will have to complete the work which we left unfinished.

Faithfully yours

ROBERT LANSING

II

'*April* 11, 1918: The Archbishop of York, ex-President Taft, Senator Root, Presidents Lowell and Mezes came to lunch to-day,' wrote House in his diary. 'The discussion during the main part of the meal was largely about the Civil War, its causes, and the attitude of Great Britain and her statesmen toward the belligerents. Interesting as it was, I was compelled to break in when luncheon was over in order to start the discussion for which we had met. We wish to harmonize the divergent views of Taft, Lowell, Root, and the British group with the President's as how best to prevent future wars.

'I read them an extract from the President's letter on this subject as well as a letter from Lansing. There was general disagreement with Lansing. Root agreed with him as far as he went, but thought he left the matter in a state where it is

now and was before the war. Lansing's idea is that it is only necessary to democratize the world, and that the democracies will not war upon one another. . . .

'The portion which I read from the President's letter to me ran as follows: My own conviction, as you know, is that the administrative *constitution* of the League must grow and not be made; that we must *begin* with solemn covenants, covering mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity (if the final territorial agreements of the peace conference are fair and satisfactory and *ought* to be perpetuated), but that the method of carrying those mutual pledges out should be left to develop of itself, case by case. Any attempt to begin by putting executive authority in the hands of any particular group of powers would be to sow a harvest of jealousy and distrust which would spring up at once and choke the whole thing. To take up one thing and only one, but quite sufficient in itself: The United States Senate would never ratify any treaty which put the force of the United States at the disposal of any such group or body. Why begin at the impossible end, when it is feasible to plant a system which will slowly but surely ripen into fruition? [1]

'None of them altogether agreed with the President. They thought he did not go far enough. The final conclusion was that Root should draw up a memorandum embracing three proposals:

'1. That every nation was interested in war, no matter how small or in what quarter of the globe.

'2. That some machinery should be set up during peace times through which, at the threat of war, a conference of nations could be held for the purpose of making an attempt to stop it.

'3. Some machinery establishing a court or bureau of arbitration to which controversial matters might be referred.

[1] The text of this letter is in Wilson to House, March 22, 1918.

'The Archbishop was to receive a degree at Columbia University and was compelled to leave before we had finished our conference.'

As a result of this and other conferences Colonel House was able to draft certain principles which might be safely incorporated in the constitution of a league with the approval of the different groups of opinion. Nothing was published, however, or even put into formal articles, because of the President's unwillingness to stimulate discussion that might ripen into controversy. Once again pressure came from across the Atlantic. In Great Britain the Phillimore Committee completed its preliminary report with a draft constitution of a league of nations. This the British Government proposed to publish. Lord Robert Cecil wrote to House suggesting that before publication the American Government might wish an interchange of views, and that in any case he hoped to have an expression of his own personal opinion.

In reply Colonel House indicated very generally the nature of the League which he had in mind. The part of his plan which was wholly new was that in which he insisted upon a declaration to the effect that the standard of international conduct must be determined by criteria similar to those applying to standards of personal honor. 'Unless this is done,' he wrote in his diary, 'it does not seem to me to be much use to sign covenants only to be broken at will, and the breaking condoned.' [1] He also wrote to President Wilson, suggesting that the time had come to draft at least a tentative scheme.

[1] House had suggested this to Wilson many months before, notably when advising him as to his speech of May 27, 1916. See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 338.

Colonel House to Lord Robert Cecil

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 25, 1918

DEAR LORD ROBERT:

There seem to be as many opinions concerning a league of nations as there are groups working at a solution.

To me there is something pathetic in the faith which the people of nearly every country have in the ability of their statesmen to work out this problem in a way that will insure an enduring peace.

I believe we should use as our guide the experience which mankind has gathered in solving the questions of law and order between individuals. The more advanced states of the world have worked out a fairly satisfactory civilization. But, internationally, thanks to Germany, we are thrown back to the Stone Age.

One of the most essential features of any league seems to me to be the installation of a moral standard such as that maintained among individuals of honor. Even before Germany smashed the international fabric, reprehensible action was condoned under the broad cover of patriotism; actions which in individuals would have been universally condemned and the perpetrators ostracized from society.

I believe that the most vital element in bringing about a world-wide reign of peace is to have the same stigma rest upon the acts of nations as upon the acts of individuals. When the people of a country are held up to the scorn and condemnation of the world because of the dishonorable acts of their representatives, they will not longer tolerate such acts.

To bring this about will not I think be so difficult as it would seem, and when this condition is realized, a nation may be counted upon to guard its treaty obligations with the same fidelity as an individual guards his honor.

I do not believe at the start it would be possible to form

any court [1] or to have an international force at the disposal of the court to enforce its decision. It seems to me that in forming the league we could not go further than to agree that:

(1) Any war, no matter how remote or how insignificant the country involved, is the concern of all nations.

(2) Some country like Switzerland or Holland should be selected for a centralized peace ground. The ministers sent there should be *ipso facto* peace delegates.

When there is a rumor or murmur of war these delegates should by previous agreement automatically meet and

(a) Insist that the proposed belligerents agree to settle their differences by arbitration according to the agreement, which, as members of a League of Nations, they have signed.

(b) The arbitrators to be selected as follows: One by each belligerent and these two to select a third. In the event the two could come to no agreement as to the third, then the selection of the third arbitrator should be made by the League.

(c) Either nation [subject] to the arbitration may, if dissatisfied with the findings, have the right to appeal to the League.

(d) The finding shall be set aside only by a three-fourths vote.

(e) If the belligerent against whom the finding is made insists upon going to war, then it shall become obligatory upon every nation in the League to immediately break off all diplomatic, financial, and economic relations of every character and, when and where possible, also exert physical force against the offender.[2]

(3) One of the fundamental principles of the League shall be a declaration that each signatory nation shall bind itself

[1] Colonel House soon changed his mind as to the need of a court and included it in his first plan. President Wilson was opposed to it.

[2] Cf. the arrangements made by the Protocol in 1924 for the determination of the aggressor state.

forever to maintain the same standard as that maintained among people of honor so that any nation that failed to live up to the letter and spirit of this agreement shall be held up to public condemnation.

(4) The members of the League shall guarantee each other's territorial integrity. Any violation of this guarantee shall be visited by the same penalties as set forth in Paragraph (2), section (e).

These are my personal views at the moment and do not represent either the President or the groups over here that are working at the problem.

I would appreciate your letting me know what you think of the plan I have proposed.

I am, my dear Lord Robert,

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 25, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter which I have written Lord Robert Cecil in response to one from him in which he asks for my personal views.

The sentiment is growing rapidly everywhere in favor of some organized opposition to war and I think it essential that you should guide the movement. It will not wait for the peace conference and, while I can understand that you would not want to commit yourself to any plan until the war is ended, yet there are other ways by which you can direct it.

The trouble that I see ahead is that the English, French, or the groups here may hit upon some scheme that will appeal to people generally and around it public opinion will crystallize to such an extent that it will be difficult to change the form at the peace conference. It is one of the things with

which your name should be linked during the ages. The whole world looks upon you as the champion of the idea, but there is a feeling not only in this country but in England and France as well that you are reluctant to take the initiative.

If you do not approve the letter which I have written Lord Robert I can stop it.

Everywhere the most popular slogan is, 'This is a war to make future wars impossible,' and I believe that sentiment animates not only the people but the soldiers as well.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

'*June* 24, 1918: President Lowell of Harvard,' wrote House in his diary, 'came for lunch. Our talk was largely concerning a league of nations. I read him the letter I wrote Lord Robert Cecil, and he approved with some slight qualifications. He said the executive committee of the League to Enforce Peace will meet in a day or two and he wished to know what action I thought they should take. I advised them to do nothing for the moment. . . . If both the President and Lord Robert agreed with my views, we could crystallize sentiment around them in this country, in England, and in France.'

III

This interchange of letters between Lord Robert Cecil and Colonel House proved to be the immediate origin of the first formal American drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations. President Wilson made no immediate reply to House's letter of June 25, which enclosed a copy of the letter to Lord Robert; he was, as he wrote, 'sweating blood' over the Russian question. 'There never were so many problems *per diem*, it seems to me, as now.' But on July 8 he took up definitely the problem of drafting a tentative constitution for the League. He had received a copy of the Phillimore

Report, which the British Government had sent him, but he was evidently too busy even to read it at this time.[1] He asked House to rewrite the 'constitution' contained in that report: as you think it ought to be rewritten, along the lines of your recent letter to Lord Robert Cecil.[2] He did not suggest that the rewritten Constitution should serve any purpose other than to provide him with the basis for the comment and opinion which the British Government requested, nor did he give House any hint as to what was in his own mind as to a desirable constitution for a league. As it turned out, the draft which House produced in answer to the President's request was the foundation of the plan that Wilson took to the Peace Conference the following December.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 11, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . There is no denying that there has recently been a great acceleration of the thought and desire for a League of Nations. This thought has crystallized around your name and I believe you are wise in giving it immediate and thorough consideration.

It is an exceedingly difficult problem to solve in a way to satisfy the hopes of the peoples and yet satisfy a practical mind. But it can be done because the world will be so weary of war and the thought of it that it will seize upon any intelligent way out.

I hope to see you solve this difficulty as you did our banking and financial problems. They are not without analogy.[3]

[1] Thus Wiseman cabled to Reading, on August 16: 'The President remarked that . . . when he saw you he had not read the Phillimore Report.' See below, p. 52.
[2] Wilson to House, July 8, 1918.
[3] What House had in mind was the point which he later developed at length: that much of the value of the Federal Reserve Act was psychological. It instilled such confidence that people began to say, 'Under this system panics are impossible.' So long as they believed it, panics of course would be impossible. In the same way he argued that if an organization for the prevention of war could be evolved, which would instill confidence in its efficiency, the chief psychological cause of war, fear of aggression, would be removed.

In spite of the skepticism of the financial world, panics have been made impossible and the shadow of impending disaster has been lifted. Now if war can be made impossible, what a glorious culmination of your other accomplishments.

I shall get at the matter immediately and will send you something for consideration early next week. One of the difficulties to be encountered is the desire of the French not only to have a League of Nations started by the Entente before the war ends, but to exclude the Central Powers afterwards. Lord Grey's recent assertion that a League of Nations would be incomplete without them has raised a storm in France and only a few Socialist papers have commended the idea.

Affectionately yours
E. M. HOUSE

On July 13 House set to work drafting the constitution of the League which he had in mind. He was assisted by David Hunter Miller, who for several months had been in charge of the subject for the Inquiry, and he discussed his draft with Sir William Wiseman who made critical suggestions. He had before him the Phillimore Report, but as he wrote to the President, he did not use it as a basis for his own draft, although in the process of revision he incorporated several of its salient provisions. The main lines which Colonel House followed were those which he had emphasized in his letter to Cecil.

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Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 14, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have spent yesterday and to-day in formulating a draft of a Convention for a League of Nations.

I will not send it to you until Monday or Tuesday, for I would like a day or two to lapse before reading it over and making any corrections which seem pertinent. A memorandum will also be attached explaining the reason for each article where it is not obvious.

The draft was written without reference to the British Covenant [Phillimore Report] which you sent. When finished the two were compared and several of the Articles of the British were incorporated as a whole. In my opinion the British document would not at all meet the requirements of the situation. The reason I wrote the draft without reference to the British was to keep from getting entangled with their plan.

If you approve of the draft I believe it would be wise for you to take some means of giving it to the world, and as quickly as possible, in order to let thought crystallize around your plan instead of some other. It would be better, I think, to do this without consultation with any foreign government and so state in your announcement. If you take it up with the British or French there will be heart-burnings if the others are not brought into it.

It is written with a view of not hurting the sensibilities of any nation either in the Entente or the Central Powers. It is also written with a view that the League might be confined to the Great Powers, giving the smaller powers every benefit that may be derived therefrom. If the smaller nations are taken in, the question of equal voting power is an almost insurmountable obstacle. Several of the smaller nations have indicated a willingness to come into a League of Nations only

DIVISION CHIEFS OF THE INQUIRY

ECONOMIC ADVISERS

upon condition that the voting power of each country shall be the same — notably Switzerland.

If this were agreed upon, Mexico and the Central American States could out-vote Germany, England, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States, and yet in the enforcement of peace or of any of the decrees of the League of Nations they would not only be impotent but unwilling to share the responsibility.

These smaller nations might become neutralized as Belgium and Switzerland were, with representation [but] without voting power, just as our Territories have had representation in Congress without votes.

I believe you will find the draft a basis of a practical working arrangement.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

The letter is interesting, since it indicates that at this time House had in mind restricting the League to the Great Powers. On the face of it the plan seemed illiberal. It apparently ran directly counter to President Wilson's constant plea for the recognition of the smaller nations as having equal rights with the Great Powers; later at the Peace Conference House himself consistently defended the claims of the smaller nations, as in the cases of Belgium and Poland. House evidently based his argument upon the practical consideration that control must go with responsibility and upon the assumption that the smaller states would be actually safer under the protection of the large than under a régime of rivalry among themselves.

'The Great Powers at the Peace Conference should put out a plan so just,' he wrote in his diary of July 5, 1918, 'that all the smaller nations will be glad to concur in it. It has been shown in this war that the smaller nations like Holland,

Denmark, and Switzerland will not participate in a general war unless they are compelled to do so by the exigencies of the occasion. Therefore why permit them to exercise a directing hand upon the nations having to furnish not only the financial but the physical force necessary to maintain order and peace? I am sorry to come to this conclusion, because it does not seem toward the trend of liberalism. However, the idealist who is not practical oftentimes does a cause more harm than those frankly reactionary.'

Colonel House's argument against the admission of the smaller nations on the basis of equal rights with the larger, was later met by the plans of Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts, in which House himself enthusiastically concurred. The war experience of the Entente Powers taught them methods of international control in which the influence of the larger and smaller states was weighted roughly according to their strength. From this experience was evolved the plan of an executive council with representatives from the smaller states but dominated by the Great Powers, and an assembly to which all member states of the League, large or small, were admitted upon an equal basis. Thus the League was ultimately founded upon the principle of that 'practical idealism' which House had approved.[1]

[1] House's first draft of the Covenant was, of course, written hurriedly in two days as a memorandum for the President. It was not intended to represent his final thoughts on the subject.

CHAPTER II

FIRST AMERICAN DRAFTS OF THE COVENANT

'The requisite change is . . . a universal formal and irrevocable acceptance and declaration of the view that an international breach of the peace is a matter which concerns every member of the Community of Nations. . . .'

Senator Elihu Root to Colonel House, August 16, 1918

I

On July 16, 1918, House sent to the President his draft of what he called the 'Covenant of a League of Nations.' This is apparently the first time that the word 'Covenant' was used to describe specifically the proposed agreement among the nations. Mr. Baker states that the President requested that House compile 'a new draft of a "covenant" — the word was his [Wilson's] own. . . .'[1] But in his letter to House, Wilson specifically uses the word 'constitution.'[2] House, of course, derived from Wilson's speeches the idea of utilizing this well-adapted word for the instrument, since it is certain that it is one for which the President always had some fondness.[3]

The draft of this Covenant, with House's annotations which were contained in the enclosing letter, follows. It consists of twenty-three articles, of which all but five were checked by Wilson to indicate his approval and were utilized in his own first draft.

[1] *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 218.

[2] Wilson to House, July 8, 1918.

[3] In his speech of January 22, 1917, Wilson uses the phrase 'covenant of coöperative peace.' Replying to the Pope, August 27, 1917: 'covenants to set up arbitration in the place of force.' In his message to Congress, December 4, 1917: 'covenanted peace.' In his speech of the Fourteen Points, January 8, 1918: 'A general association of nations . . . under specific covenants . . .' etc.

Suggestion for a Covenant of a League of Nations

Preamble

International civilization having proved a failure because there has not been constructed a fabric of law to which nations have yielded with the same obedience and deference as individuals submit to intra-national laws, and because public opinion has sanctioned unmoral acts relating to international affairs, it is the purpose of the States signatory to this Convention to form a League of Nations having for its purpose the maintenance throughout the world of peace, security, progress, and orderly government. Therefore it is agreed as follows:

Article 1. The same standards of honor and ethics shall prevail internationally and in affairs of nations as in other matters. The agreement or promise of a Power shall be inviolate.

Article 2. No official of a Power shall either directly or by indirection on behalf of his Government, be expected or permitted to act or communicate other than consistently with the truth, the honor, and the obligation of the Power which he represents.

Article 3. Any attempt by a Power, either openly or in secret, whether by propaganda or otherwise, to influence one Power or nation against another shall be deemed dishonorable.[1]

Article 4. Any open or direct inquiry regarding the acts or purposes of a Power may be made by another Power as of

[1] 'The Preamble,' wrote House to Wilson, 'and Articles 1, 2, and 3 are the keystone of the arch. It is absolutely essential for the peoples of the world to realize that they can never have international peace and order if they permit their representatives to sanction the unmoral practices of the past. Every large nation, as you know, has been guilty. . . . Articles 1, 2, and 3 might well come under the Preamble. The reason they are segregated is that it gives them emphasis and makes the pledge binding.' In Wilson's draft the spirit of these articles is retained in the Preamble, but the wording is not used.

course, and shall be regarded as an act of friendship tending to promote frankness in international relations, but any secret inquiry to such end shall be deemed dishonorable.[1]

Article 5. Any war or threat of war is a matter of concern to the League of Nations, and to the Powers members thereof.[2]

Article 6. The Ambassadors and Ministers of the Contracting Powers to X and the Minister for the Foreign Affairs for X shall act as the respective delegates of the Powers in the League of Nations. The meetings of the delegates shall be held at the seat of government of X, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of X shall be the presiding officer.

If the Delegates deem it necessary or advisable, they may meet temporarily at the seat of government of Y or Z, in which case the Ambassador or Minister to X of the country in which the meeting is held shall be the presiding officer *pro tempore*.[3]

[1] 'No. 4,' wrote House, 'was written with the intention of satisfying those who would be distrustful of Germany in the event she became a signatory Power. It is necessary, I think, to do away with the abominable custom of espionage, but to abolish it and leave some dishonorable nation free to surreptitiously prepare for war would be a mistake. It is to be remembered that nations are even more suspicious of one another than individuals, and such suspicion, as in the case of individuals, is nine times out of ten unfounded. Instead of letting this condition grow there should be some way in which the truth could be openly arrived at.'

This was one of the articles left unchecked by President Wilson. Perhaps he felt that its purpose was covered by the following article. He certainly approved of the motive behind it, for on the *George Washington*, December 10, 1918, he explained privately that his idea of an effective League carried with it the assumption that any nation would have the right 'to butt in' (the word was his own), if it suspected the purposes of another Power. [Notes made by C. S., December 10, 1918.]

[2] This became Article VIII of Wilson's first draft of the Covenant and Article XI of the final Covenant.

[3] 'No. 6,' wrote Colonel House, 'is taken largely from Article 5 of the British draft. Two alternatives are named for the seat of meetings because it is conceivable that there might be trouble between Holland

Article 7. The Delegates shall meet in the interests of peace whenever war is rumored or threatened, and also whenever a Delegate of any power shall inform the Delegates that a meeting in the interests of peace is advisable.

Article 8. The Delegates shall also meet at such other times as they shall from time to time determine.[1]

Article 9. The Delegates shall regulate their own procedure and may appoint committees to inquire and report. The Delegates shall constitute a Secretariat and fix the duties thereof and all expenses of the Secretariat shall be paid by the Contracting Powers as the Delegates may determine. In all matters covered by this article the Delegates may decide by the votes of a majority of the Contracting Powers represented.[2]

Article 10. An International Court composed of not more than fifteen members shall be constituted, which shall have jurisdiction to determine any difference between nations which has not been settled by diplomacy, arbitration, or otherwise, and which relates to the existence, interpretation, or effect of a treaty, or which may be submitted by consent,

and Belgium, and if either of them represented X or Y it might be necessary to move the conference to Z.'

This became Article I of Wilson's draft. In the later British drafts and in the final Covenant it was changed to provide for a Council and the seat of the League set at Geneva.

[1] Articles 7 and 8 were incorporated in Article VIII in the Wilson draft, and in Articles III and IV of the final draft of the Covenant.

[2] 'The first and last sentence in this,' wrote House, 'are taken verbatim from Article 7 of the British draft. I interlarded a sentence providing for a Secretariat and for the funds to maintain it.

'To all intents and purposes the representatives of the Contracting Powers become automatically an International Parliament, and I am sure it will be necessary for them to be in almost continuous session. I believe that it will be a place of such power and consequence that the contracting parties will send their leading statesmen to represent them. It will be a greater honor to become a member of this body than to hold any other appointive position in the world, and it is probable that ex-Presidents, ex-Prime Ministers, and ex-Chancellors will be chosen.'

This Article became Article II in the Wilson draft. It was elaborated in Article VI of the final draft.

or which relates to matters of commerce, including in such matters, the validity or effect internationally of a statute regulation or practice. The Delegates may at their discretion submit to the Court such other questions as may seem to them advisable.

The judges of the International Court shall, both originally and from time to time as vacancies may occur, be chosen by the Delegates. A judge of the International Court shall retire from office when he has reached the age of seventy-two years, and may be so retired at any time by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates, but in case of retirement of a judge from office, the salary paid to him shall be continued to be so paid during his natural life.

A judge may be removed by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates. The International Court shall formulate its own rules of procedure.[1]

Article 11. Any difference between nations relating to matters of commerce and which involves the validity or effect internationally of a statute regulation or practice, shall, if the Power having adopted such statute, regulation, or practice so request, be submitted to its highest national court for decision, before submission to the International Court.[2]

Article 12. The highest national court of each Contracting

[1] 'No. 10,' wrote House, 'provides for an International Court to have jurisdiction to determine certain questions which are now determined in many countries in courts of last resort. This court should be smaller than fifteen members.

'In the past I have been opposed to a court, but in working the matter out it has seemed to me a necessary part of the machinery. In time the court might well prove the strongest part of it.'

This article and the two following were not checked by the President to indicate his approval; nor in his revised draft did he include an international court. It was only after discussions began at Paris that he accepted it.

[2] 'No. 11,' wrote House, 'was written largely to conform with the laws and practices of certain nations, particularly, the Latin American Republics.'

Power shall have jurisdiction to hear and finally determine any international dispute which may be submitted for its decision.[1]

Article 13. The Contracting Powers agree that all disputes between them or any of them of any nature whatsoever which shall not be settled by diplomacy and which are not within the provisions of Article 10 shall be referred for arbitration before three arbitrators, one to be selected by each party to the dispute and one to be chosen by two arbitrators so selected, or, in the event of their failure to agree to such choice, the third arbitrator shall be selected by the Delegates.

The decision of the arbitrators may be set aside on the appeal of a party to the dispute, by a vote of three fourths of the Delegates, if the decision of the arbitrators was unanimous, and by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates if the decision of the arbitrators was not unanimous, but shall otherwise be finally binding and conclusive.

When any decision of the arbitrators shall have been set aside by the Delegates, the dispute shall again be submitted to arbitration before three arbitrators, chosen as heretofore provided, but none of them shall have previously acted as such and the decision of the arbitrators upon the second arbitration shall be finally binding and conclusive without any right of appeal.[2]

Article 14. Any Power which the Delegates determine shall have failed to submit to the International Court any dispute which that Court has jurisdiction as of course, or

[1] 'No. 12,' wrote House, 'has in mind the possibility of using, if desired, courts of last resort now in being as a medium for the settlement of disputes in the event other methods prescribed do not appeal to certain nations. I also had in mind that if such provision were a part of the Covenant, it would have a tendency to make all courts of last appeal broader and less biased in passing upon international questions.'

Neither Article 11 nor 12 found a place in the final Covenant.

[2] This became Article V in the first Wilson draft.

failed or neglected to carry out any decision of that Court, or of a national Court to which a dispute has been submitted by consent for decision, or failed to submit to arbitration any dispute pursuant to Article 13, hereof, or failed to carry out any decision of the arbitrators, shall thereupon lose and be deprived of all rights of commerce and intercourse with the Contracting Powers.[1]

Article 15. If any Power shall declare war or begin hostilities before submitting a dispute with another Power as the case may be, either to the International Court or to Arbitrators, as herein provided, or shall declare war or begin hostilities in regard to any dispute which has been decided adversely to it by said Court or by Arbitrators or pursuant to Article 12 hereof, as the case may be, the Contracting Powers shall not only cease all commerce and intercourse with that Power as in Article 14 provided, but shall also arrange to blockade and close the frontiers of that power to commerce and intercourse with the world.[2]

Article 16. As regards disputes between one of the Contracting Powers and a Power not a party to this Convention, the Contracting Power shall endeavor to obtain submission of the dispute to judicial decision or to arbitration. If the other state will not agree to submit the dispute to judicial decision or to arbitration the Contracting Power shall bring it before the Delegates. In the latter event the Delegates shall in the name of the League of Nations invite the state not a party to this Convention to become *ad hoc* a party and to submit its case to judicial decision or to arbitration and in such case the provisions hereinbefore contained shall be applicable to the dispute both against and in favor of such state as if it were a party to this Convention.

[1] This became Article VI in the first Wilson draft, reference to the Court being omitted.

[2] This article became Article VII in the Wilson draft. The President added the idea of military sanctions by completing the sentence with: 'and to use any force that may be necessary to accomplish that object.'

Article 17. If the state not a party to this Convention will not accept the invitation to become *ad hoc* a party, the Delegates shall inquire into the dispute and shall make a recommendation in respect thereof.[1]

Article 18. If hostilities shall be commenced against the Contracting Power by the other state before a decision of the dispute, or before the recommendation made by the delegates in respect thereof, or contrary to such recommendation, the Contracting Powers will thereupon cease all commerce and intercourse with the other state and will also arrange to blockade and close the frontiers of that state to commerce and intercourse with the world and any of the Contracting Powers may come to the assistance of the Contracting Power against which hostilities have been commenced.[2]

Article 19. In the case of a dispute between states not parties to this Convention, any Power may bring the matter before the Delegates, who shall tender the good offices of the League of Nations with a view to the peaceable settlement of the dispute.

If one of the Powers, party to the dispute, shall offer and agree to submit its interests and course of action thereto wholly to the control and decision of the League of Nations, that Power shall *ad hoc* be deemed a Contracting Power. If no one of the Powers, parties to such dispute shall so offer and agree, the Delegates shall take such action and make such recommendations to their Governments as will preserve peace and prevent hostilities and result in the settlement of the dispute.[3]

[1] Articles 16 and 17 became Article IX in the Wilson draft and were incorporated in Article XVII of the final Covenant.

[2] Article 18 became Article X in the Wilson draft and was incorporated in Article XVII of the final Covenant.

[3] 'Nos. 16, 17, 18, and 19 are obvious,' wrote Colonel House, 'and in the event that it is desirable to have a League limited to the Great Powers, these articles would force every nation not a member of the League

Article 20. The Contracting Powers unite in several guarantees to each other of their territorial integrity and political independence, subject, however, to such territorial modifications, if any, as may become necessary in the future by reason of changes in present racial conditions and aspirations, pursuant to the principle of self-determination and as shall also be regarded by three fourths of the Delegates as necessary and proper for the welfare of the peoples concerned; recognizing also that all territorial changes involve equitable compensation and that the peace of the world is superior in importance and interest to all questions of boundary.[1]

Article 21. The Contracting Powers recognize the principle that permanent peace will require that national armaments shall be reduced to the lowest point consistent with safety, and the Delegates are directed to formulate at once a plan by which such a reduction may be brought about. The plan so formulated shall not be binding until and unless unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this Covenant.

to submit their disputes to the League, or use the forms of settlement prescribed by it.

'Articles 13, 14, and 16 of the British draft seek in a measure to accomplish the same purpose, but in an entirely different way.'

According to Ray Stannard Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 86) Article 19 of the House draft was not checked by President Wilson to indicate his approval. This article, however, was included by the President in his first draft as Article XI, and it was ultimately incorporated in Article XVII of the final draft of the Covenant.

[1] 'No. 20,' wrote House, 'was written with the thought that it would not do to have territorial guarantees inflexible. It is quite conceivable that conditions might so change in the course of time as to make it a serious hardship for certain portions of one nation to continue under the government of that nation.'

This article was incorporated by Wilson as Article III of his draft, and the first phrase, modified in language, became the famous Article X of the final draft: 'to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League.' Much to House's regret the last portion of the article, providing for a certain elasticity, was not incorporated in the final Covenant.

The Contracting Powers agree that munitions and implements of war shall not be manufactured by private enterprise and that publicity as to all national armaments and programmes is essential.[1]

Article 22. Any Power not a party to this Convention may apply to the Delegates for leave to become a party. The Delegates may act favorably on the application if they shall regard the granting thereof as tending to promote the peace and security of the world.

Article 23. A. The Contracting Powers severally agree that the present Convention abrogates all treaty obligations *inter se* inconsistent with the terms thereof, and that they will not enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms hereof.

B. Where any of the Contracting Powers, before becoming party to this Convention, shall have entered into any treaty imposing upon it obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Convention, it shall be the duty of such Power to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.[2]

II

It is no part of the purpose of this chapter to trace the ultimate ancestry of the Covenant of the League of Nations as written in the peace treaties. Obviously no single one of the various plans drafted in 1918 was wholly original and no one of them can claim exclusive parentage of the final Covenant. The importance of the House draft lies in the fact that

[1] Article 21 was incorporated in the Wilson draft as Article IV and in the final draft of the Covenant in Articles VIII and IX, except that the veto upon private manufacture of armament was eliminated.

[2] 'No. 22. The first sentence of this article,' wrote House, 'is taken verbatim from the British Article 17. I did not use their second sentence for the reason that it seemed to point to Germany, and I have worded the second sentence of No. 22 differently to avoid this.

'No. 23 is almost a verbatim copy of Article 1 of the British.'

These two articles were incorporated in the Wilson draft as Articles XII and XIII, and in the final draft as Articles I and XX.

it was utilized by President Wilson as the basis for what may be termed the first official American draft; that draft, in turn, was merely contributory to the joint Anglo-American plan presented to the League of Nations Commission in Paris, which was destined to be the immediate predecessor of the Covenant.

House's draft of July, 1918, was much more ambitious than the original British plan as contained in the Phillimore Report. The latter was carefully designed to avoid the appearance of attempting to create a formal confederation of states with a pooling of sovereignty; it proposed rather a diplomatic alliance for the purpose of preventing war by a guaranteed process of arbitration. House's plan went much farther along the path towards an actual association of nations; indeed to some it might seem to threaten the creation of a super-state: he added a secretariat and a permanent international court; he regarded the assembly of delegates as a sort of permanent world-parliament. He accepted the British principle of a guaranteed process of arbitration to prevent war, but he also provided a direct guarantee of 'political independence and territorial integrity,' the same formula as that used by President Wilson in December, 1914, when he first sketched the Pan-American Pact, a guarantee which House meant to render less inflexible by the provisions for peaceful modification of territorial possessions as changing conditions of the future might demand. In the House draft, as in the Phillimore plan, were also incorporated the principle of compulsory arbitration and criteria for determining the aggressor state, characteristic of the Protocol of 1924.

In another respect Colonel House's plan was more ambitious than the Phillimore Report. He added a provision recognizing that permanent peace depended upon a limitation of armament, and he entrusted to the League the function of carrying such limitation into effect. His plan also

carried with it the abolition of the manufacture of munitions of war by private firms, and emphasized the principle of complete publicity as to national armaments.

Judging from President Wilson's letter which Colonel House read to Root, Lowell, and Taft at the April luncheon, the President had not expected that House would elaborate the Covenant in so much detail. In that letter Wilson objected to anything like a formal constitution and insisted that the League must grow gradually. None the less he approved the House draft almost in its entirety, and his own rewriting of it was practically confined to phraseology. He made only two changes of any importance when he came to the construction of his own first draft: he omitted the international court and the two articles dealing with the use of national courts by members of the League; he expanded House's suggested sanctions, which were purely economic in character, so as to include the use of military force when necessary to exert the authority of the League against a recalcitrant member.

In the mean time a French Government committee, under the chairmanship of Léon Bourgeois, had studied plans for a League and drafted a report which was sent to Wilson and House. The French draft was essentially the same as that presented to the League of Nations Commission at Paris, during the Peace Conference, and it does not seem to have modified the ideas of either the British or the Americans. Its outstanding characteristic was the provision for international military forces under a permanent staff. To such a proposal neither of the Anglo-Saxon nations was likely to agree.

Colonel House was quite aware of the various objections that would be raised to certain aspects of his plan, especially to the direct guarantee of territorial integrity which he had included. He discussed the Covenant with Lord Reading and studied carefully the comments of authoritative stu-

dents of international affairs. Both Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Elihu Root sent him long letters, which carry the interest and historical importance that go with the judgment of outstanding leaders of opinion in this matter.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, *July* 22, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I am extremely grateful to you for your letter of June 24.

There are indeed a large number of opinions about a league of nations, but I am struck with the fact that certain broad principles seem pretty generally accepted. One is that international disputes may be divided into classes, though it is obvious that the definition of classes must be rather nebulous. Still, broadly, almost every one thinks that only the less important disputes can really be disposed of by a tribunal of arbitration, and that I am sure is true. In any dispute between two nations involving vital national interests neither of them would be ready to accept the decision of any external tribunal. Nor do I understand that you disagree with that view, though you believe that it might be useful to have a preliminary discussion before a tribunal, and then a reference to a council of the nations. You may be right, but I have a kind of feeling that it would be impossible to construct, even for this purpose, a tribunal that would command sufficient confidence to do useful work in vital international disputes.

The Phillimore scheme, as you will remember, proceeds on a different path. It relies on making the two disputing nations, or group of nations, bring their quarrel for open discussion before an international conference. This very much carries out your idea that we must rely on international public opinion as our chief guarantee of peace. The real trouble is, how are we to secure that the disputants *shall* bring their dispute before the council of the nations? For

that purpose, according to the Phillimore scheme, coercion is to be employed.

Since I sent you our scheme I have seen the French proposals. Generally speaking, I am not very much impressed with them, but there is one suggestion which seems to me very important, and that is that we should utilise the international organisations which we are now constructing for the control of raw materials and other things as a lever to compel the nations of the world to accept a league of peace. The suggestion is that we might make participation in those international organisations dependent on adhesion to the league of peace, which seems a very fruitful suggestion and well worth investigation.

I notice that you propose that the components of the league should make a profession of faith to the effect that they will abide by a code of honour. I think it would be all to the good to have such a profession included in the instrument by which the league of peace was constructed, but I am afraid I do not think that by itself it could be relied upon. The example of Germany in this war shows that under pressure of false teaching and national danger there is no crime which a civilised nation will not commit, and the same has been found true over and over again in history.

I am convinced that unless some form of coercion can be devised which will work more or less automatically no league of peace will endure. You refer to the history of the civilisation of individuals; but surely the great instrument of law and order has been the establishment of the doctrine of the supremacy of the law. So long as codes of law were only, or mainly, codes of honour or good conduct they were always disobeyed by any one who was sufficiently powerful to do so, with the result that we in this country had to endure periods of anarchy culminating in the Wars of the Roses. On the Continent things were even worse, and it was very largely the luck of having here so vigorous a ruler as Henry

VII, combined with his skill in devising a means of coercing the barons and feudal chiefs that really laid the foundations of our present civilisation. The Star Chamber by its subsequent history achieved an evil reputation, but at the time of its institution by Henry VII it was a most valuable instrument for coercing the forces of disorder.

I admit that I do not see my way to the institution of an international Star Chamber, but I do believe that the means of control conferred by the complications of modern finance and modern commerce should be very powerful, and if they could be strengthened by such a scheme as the French propose, I do believe that we might devise an efficient sanction for the commands of a league of peace. One great danger, however, I see in its way: the French suggest that it should be confined to democratically governed nations — at least so I understand them.

I cannot help feeling that this is a most dangerous path for us to travel. After the Napoleonic wars public opinion in Europe believed that Jacobinism was the great danger to peace, just as now we believe, with more justification, that Prussian Militarism is what we have mainly to fear. Accordingly, the principal nations entered into the Holy Alliance, with a view to suppressing Jacobinism whenever they saw it raising its head. Very soon Great Britain withdrew from the League, but it persisted with the most disastrous results for many years in Europe. I am dreadfully afraid that we may make the same mistake now. Prussian militarism is indeed a portentous evil, but if, misled by our fear of it, we try to impose on all the nations of the world a form of government which has been indeed admirably successful in America and this country, but is not necessarily suited for all others, I am convinced we shall plant the seeds of very serious international trouble.

It is for the same reason that I am reluctant even to accept your principle that we ought to guarantee each

other's territorial integrity. I am sure we ought to guarantee, as far as it can be done, the observance of all treaties, and as a corollary we ought to provide means for their periodical reviewal, but I do not know that territorial integrity should be specially singled out from other treaty obligations and as it were crystallised for all time.

I hope these observations will not seem to you very desultory and unintelligible, but the subject is a difficult and complicated one.

Again thanking you very warmly for sending me your letter, Believe me,

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

I am in hopes that this Government will adopt the Phillimore Report as a basis of discussion with their allies.

'*July* 28, 1918: [Conference between House and Reading.] The President,' wrote House in his diary, 'had told Reading of my letter to Lord Robert Cecil and of his intention to formulate a plan for a league of nations. I thereupon let Reading read my letter to Lord Robert and then read to him the greater part of the suggested Covenant for a League of Nations which I had sent the President.

'We discussed the matter at length. I desired to get Reading's legal mind to bear upon the different points. He expressed himself as pleased with the document as a whole. His feeling, however, was that unless Germany changed her form of government and its personnel, it would be useless to include her in the League. Reading thought the subject might be brought up in Parliament before it adjourned early in August and that the report of the Committee, of which Lord Phillimore is the head, might be published. I advised him to send a cable to-night, when he reached New York, asking that this should not be done. We do not want them to anticipate the President.'

Senator Root to Colonel House

CLINTON, NEW YORK
August 16, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I promised to give you in writing the substance of some things I said during the luncheon at your apartment some time ago.

The first requisite for any durable concert of peaceable nations to prevent war is a fundamental change in the principle to be applied to international breaches of the peace.

The view now assumed and generally applied is that the use of force by one nation towards another is a matter in which only the two nations concerned are primarily interested, and if any other nation claims a right to be heard on the subject it must show some specific interest of its own in the controversy. That burden of proof rests upon any other nation which seeks to take part if it will relieve itself of the charge of impertinent interference and avoid the resentment which always meets impertinent interference in the affairs of an independent sovereign state. This view was illustrated by Germany in July, 1914, when she insisted that the invasion of Serbia by Austria-Hungary was a matter which solely concerned those two States, and upon substantially that ground refused to agree to the conference proposed by Sir Edward Grey. The requisite change is an abandonment of this view, and a universal formal and irrevocable acceptance and declaration of the view that an international breach of the peace is a matter which concerns every member of the Community of Nations — a matter in which every nation has a direct interest, and to which every nation has a right to object.

These two views correspond to the two kinds of responsibility in municipal law which we call civil responsibility and criminal responsibility. If I make a contract with you and break it, it is no business of our neighbor. You can sue me or

submit, and he has nothing to say about it. On the other hand, if I assault and batter you, every neighbor has an interest in having me arrested and punished, because his own safety requires that violence shall be restrained. At the basis of every community lies the idea of organization to preserve the peace. Without that idea really active and controlling there can be no community of individuals or of nations. It is the gradual growth and substitution of this idea of community interest in preventing and punishing breaches of the peace which has done away with private war among civilized peoples.

The Monroe Doctrine asserted a specific interest on the part of the United States in preventing certain gross breaches of the peace on the American Continent; and when President Wilson suggested an enlargement of the Monroe Doctrine to take in the whole world, his proposal carried by necessary implication the change of doctrine which I am discussing. The change may seem so natural as to be unimportant, but it is really crucial, for the old doctrine is asserted and the broader doctrine is denied by approximately half the military power of the world, and the question between the two is one of the things about which this war is being fought. The change involves a limitation of sovereignty, making every sovereign state subject to the superior right of a community of sovereign states to have the peace preserved. The acceptance of any such principle would be fatal to the whole Prussian theory of the state and of government. When you have got this principle accepted openly, expressly, distinctly, unequivocally by the whole civilized world, you will for the first time have a Community of Nations, and the practical results which will naturally develop will be as different from those which have come from the old view of national responsibility as are the results which flow from the American Declaration of Independence compared with the results which flow from the Divine Right of Kings.

The second proposition which I made was that the public opinion of the free peoples of the world in favor of having peace preserved must have institutions through which it may receive effect. No lesson from history is clearer than this. Very strong public feeling may produce a mob which is simply destructive, or a multitude of expressions of opinion which get nowhere by themselves; but to accomplish anything affirmative some particular person must have delegated to him authority to do some particular thing in behalf of the multitude. The original forms of the institutions of government have grown from very simple beginnings developing to meet requirements from generation to generation. The important thing is that there are officers who have the right to act and the duty to act in doing things which are necessary to preserve the peace.

Some rudimentary institutions have already been developed by agreement among the nations. Provision has been made by the Hague Convention for machinery making it very easy to submit questions of international rights to a tribunal for decision. It has also been made easy to determine the truth when there is a dispute about facts through a Commission of Enquiry, as in the Dogger Bank case.

International usage arising under the concert of European powers has also made it a natural and customary thing for the powers to meet in conference when any serious exigency arises for the purpose of discussing the way to avoid general injury. All of these inchoate institutions, however — the Arbitral Tribunal, the Commission of Enquiry, the Conference of Nations — depend entirely upon individual national initiative. No one has any authority to invoke them in the name or interest of the Community of Nations which is interested in the preservation of peace. The first and natural step in the development of these institutions after the adoption of the new principle of community interest in the preservation of peace will be an agreement upon some one

or some group whose duty it will be to speak for the whole community in calling upon any two nations who appear to be about to fight to submit their claims to the consideration (I do not now say 'decision,' but consideration) of the Tribunal as it is now or may hereafter be organized, or the Commission of Enquiry, or the Conference, as the case may require. It will be exceedingly difficult for any nation which has explicitly acknowledged the community interest and right, to refuse such a demand in the name of the community, and it could not do so without clearly putting itself in the wrong in the eyes of the entire world. I do not say that it would be impossible for a nation to reject such a demand, but it would be much more difficult than it is now, and much more improbable; for example, the whole contention upon which Germany sought to save her face while she was using the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia as the occasion for going into a general war would be completely destroyed. Behind such a demand of course should stand also an agreement by the powers to act together in support of the demand made in their name and in dealing with the consequences of it.

The question how far that agreement should go brings me to the third proposition which I made, and that is that no agreement in the way of a league of peace or under whatever name should be contemplated which will probably not be kept when the time comes for acting under it. Nothing can be worse in international affairs than to make agreements and break them. It would be folly, therefore, for the United States in order to preserve or enforce peace after this War is over to enter into an agreement which the people of the United States would not regard as binding upon them. I think that observation applies to making a hard and fast agreement to go to war upon the happening of some future international event beyond the control of the United States. I think that the question whether the people of the

Country would stand by such an agreement made by the President and Senate would depend upon the way they looked at the event calling for their action at that future time when the event occurs — that they would fight if at that time they were convinced they ought to, and they would not fight if at that time they were convinced that they ought not to. It may be that an international community system may be developed hereafter which will make it possible to say 'We bind ourselves to fight upon the happening of some particular event,' but I do not think that system has so far developed that it is now practicable to make such an agreement. Of course, it may become so before this War is over. No one can tell. We are certainly rather nearer to that point than we were two or three years ago.

I think this covers what I said. I have not undertaken to add to it anything about disarmament, which I consider essential, nor about the necessity of wiping out the military autocracies who have brought on this War. I think that must be done in order to have secured peace. So long as Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs remain on the throne, we shall have to be perpetually on the alert against unrepentant professional criminals. Their agreements will always be worthless; their purposes will always be sinister; and, while we can make it much more difficult, we can never make it impossible for them to start again to shoot up the world.

Faithfully yours

ELIHU ROOT

Colonel House to Senator Root

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 23, 1918

DEAR SENATOR ROOT:

Fortunately, your letter of August 16 having to do with a Community of Nations came while the President was here. We read it together and discussed it in detail.

I do not believe there will be much difficulty in bringing our minds in harmony upon some plan. When I return to New York at the end of September I think a further exchange of views between us will be profitable.

I have given the subject considerable thought since we talked of it in the spring, and I have come to a fairly definite conclusion in my own mind. I have the report which the Phillimore Commission made to the British Government, and which I would like you to read if you have not already done so. It is a document which seems to me too weak to satisfy the hopes of the Entente world.

Sincerely yours

E. M. House

III

'*August* 14, 1918: The White House telephoned,' wrote House in his diary, 'that the President would be here in the morning. It was short notice, but we at once notified Mrs. Coolidge [1] and everything is in readiness for their arrival to-morrow morning. The Secret Service men have been out from Boston, Associated Press and other newspaper people have been notified what to say and what not to say. The Presidential party will come by special train which will be placed on a siding at Magnolia station, and the entire crew will remain during the President's visit.

'*August* 15, 1918: The President and his party arrived this morning on schedule time, around nine o'clock. . . . The President was at breakfast when we arrived. I sat with him until he had finished. . . . He led the way to the Coolidge home and to the beautiful loggia overlooking the sea, and we at once plunged into a discussion of the League of Nations. I knew intuitively that this was the purpose of his visit. . . . He started off by saying that he had written the Platform

[1] The home of Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge was put at the President's disposal during his visit.

for the Indiana Democratic Convention of the other day and received the report on it: 'We put it through just as you wrote it except we cut your six pages down to three." "This," the President said, "is what I have done with your constitution of a league of nations." [1] He then proceeded to read it as he had rewritten it. As a matter of fact, he has cut but little except he has tried to reduce the number of articles to thirteen, his lucky number. To bring this about he has been compelled to have an addendum.

'He takes two or three of the first clauses and incorporates them into the "Preamble." He has cut out the Court. We were in absolute disagreement about this. . . . The balance of the document is about as I wrote it. The only change of note is that I provided for only two belligerent nations and he makes the machinery include two or more, which is as it should be.[2]

'We discussed the advisability of making a statement in regard to it, and he agreed that it would be best not to do so. He has delayed it so long that the British are pressing to put out the Phillimore Report, and it would not do to anticipate them since I have asked the British Government not to make the report public. The President gave even a better reason. He thought if it were published in advance of the Peace Conference it would cause so much criticism in this country, particularly by Senators of the Lodge type, that it would make it difficult to do what he has in mind at the Peace Conference. He also thought that some of the American group favorable to a league would feel that we had not gone far enough and others would feel that we had gone too far. He concluded that if a governmental report was made by any of the Allied nations at this time it would inevitably

[1] The President's draft was 10 printed lines shorter than House's; 210 in place of 220.

[2] House overlooks the important change that Wilson made in adding military sanctions to economic.

cause more or less friction and would increase the difficulties of getting a proper measure through at the Peace Conference. I am sure this is true just now. . . .

'The President thinks that a league of nations might be incorporated in the Peace Treaty. In our discussion I stated that in my opinion it seemed impracticable to think of the smaller nations as members of the league on equal terms with the larger ones. He dissented quite warmly and said to exclude them would be to go contrary to all our protestations concerning them. I agreed to this and said when I sat down to write the Covenant I had in mind the participation of every nation, both great and small. However, the difficulties were so apparent that I was afraid it was an idealistic dream that could not be made practical. There are fifty-odd nations, and of these there are not more than twelve at the outside that would do any serious fighting in the event of a great war, or be of service in financing it, and yet the forty, under the plan we have drawn up and to which we both agree, could overrule and direct the twelve.

'The President was deeply concerned. . . . He wondered if we could not include all the nations that would be at the Peace Conference, with a tentative understanding that other nations might be taken in later.[1] . . .

'*August* 16, 1918: . . . When we [the President's party] drove up in two automobiles and went into the house,[2] a policeman on the beat eyed us with suspicion. After remaining in the house a few minutes the President, Grayson, and I walked out the back way, strolling around the grounds and taking a walk in the neighborhood. We did not know until after we returned that the policeman had followed us and had stopped one of the Secret Service men to tell of his suspicions. He said he knew the owners of the house were away, and having seen us drive up to the front door with

[1] Cf. above, p. 24.

[2] Of Mr. Randolph Tucker, Colonel House's son-in-law.

two machines, one of which he thought was for the "loot," and then come out the back way bareheaded, he was convinced something was wrong and was about to put us under arrest. The Secret Service man had some difficulty in making him believe that it was the President of the United States he had under suspicion.'

President Wilson used this visit at Magnolia, as he had his earlier visits, for complete relaxation and especially for separating himself from the detailed problems of war administration, so that he might readjust his perspective. Sir William Wiseman, who happened to be with House on the North Shore during the President's visit, made the following memorandum:

'Withdrawn for a brief space from the atmosphere of Washington, Wilson was able to discuss with House, and give his mind to, the broader questions of war aims and the League. I remember one afternoon in particular the President and Colonel House sat on the lawn in front of House's cottage with maps of Europe spread out before them, discussing ways and means of organizing Liberal opinion to break down the German military machine, and how the nations which had suffered from oppression might be safeguarded in the future. The Allied embassies in Washington were keenly interested and somewhat disturbed about the conferences at Magnolia. Rumors of peace overtures were flying around, and, with one excuse or another, various embassies tried to reach that part of the North Shore where they felt the destinies of Europe were being decided.'

Because of President Wilson's conviction that public discussion of the American and British plans for a League at this time would stimulate controversy rather than useful

suggestions, the British Government agreed to postpone publication of the Phillimore Report. Lord Reading, who was in England, cabled the existence of a strong demand for publication; he knew Wilson's desire to delay open debate upon the details of a League, and had urged it upon his Government. At Wilson's request, Colonel House drafted a telegram to Lord Reading, in conjunction with Sir William Wiseman under whose name it was sent, which explained the President's position in detail.

Sir William Wiseman to Lord Reading

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 16, 1918

Saturday I showed the President a copy of your cable. Colonel House was present at the interview.

The President remarked that he was glad of an opportunity of further discussion because when he saw you he had not read the Phillimore Report. He told me that he does not intend to make any public statement at present regarding the Constitution of a League of Nations.

In the first place such a statement on his part would be a target for criticism here — one section of opinion declaring that he had gone too far and another that he had not gone far enough. The whole scheme would suffer by arousing such controversy at this time.

Further he has not yet determined in his own mind the best method of constituting the League. He has his ideas on the subject but not worked out in detail. He has two main principles in view: There must be a League of Nations and it must be virile.

The President does not favour the idea of appointing an American Committee similar to the Phillimore, but says he would like nothing better than to discuss the whole problem

perfectly frankly with Mr. Lloyd George. As this is impossible at present, he will be glad to discuss the matter with any one the British Government send to him.

I gather that the President does not altogether agree with the Phillimore Report. He thinks it is too indefinite and lacking that virility which is needed in a programme for which all supporters of the project must be called upon to fight with enthusiasm.

The President asked me to urge you to persuade the Government not to publish the Report — at any rate not at this time. He sees grave dangers in public discussions as to details and methods. Each nation might become committed to its own plan and find fundamental objections in the proposals of the others. Delicate questions of national sentiment and prejudice might be stirred up, and while all the difficult problems must eventually be faced, they should not now be allowed to endanger the solidarity of the nations fighting Germany. There can be no advantage but only danger in the official publication of conclusions which must be necessarily, at this stage, immature.

I hope that I have been able to convey to you the very earnest views which the President expressed. He has formed no hasty judgment, and his considered opinion is that the publication of official views regarding the Constitution and details of a League of Nations would greatly prejudice the success of the whole scheme.

The President asked Colonel House this morning whether I had cabled you and expressed himself as much relieved, feeling that you will appreciate his point of view and be able to persuade H.M.G. not to publish the report.

We should bear in mind that the Report would certainly cause considerable controversy in this country and it is doubtful whether the President could avoid expressing his opinion about it — in which event he would be bound to say that he could not endorse the report. This could be mag-

nified by mischief makers into an important divergence of view between the two Governments.

WISEMAN

Thus President Wilson succeeded in postponing public discussion of the details of a League, and he does not seem to have studied the problem with any care after this until his arrival at the Peace Conference. At some period previous to sailing for France in December, he took over the idea of mandatories to administer conquered territory in the name of the League.[1] But it was only after reaching Paris that he accepted the British suggestion of a Council in addition to the Assembly, as well as the whole series of articles providing for the League's supervision of international bureaux, of labor activities and the Red Cross, which ultimately were included in the four last articles of the final Covenant. At Paris also, as a result of the contributions of Lord Robert Cecil, General Smuts, Mr. Balfour, Sir Eric Drummond, and many others, the rather crude machinery of the League as planned in the House draft, which the President had accepted in his own first draft, was transformed and enormously improved.

It is not true, however, as has sometimes been asserted, that the President left for the Peace Conference without any specific plan for a League. Its essential features were sketched and a draft Covenant in his files long before he embarked upon the *George Washington*.

[1] Mr. Baker states (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 224–27) that the President took over the idea of mandatories from General Smuts after he reached Europe. He doubtless sharpened his ideas regarding the mandatory principle as a result of his study of General Smuts's pamphlet on the League, but he certainly had it in mind before he reached Europe. On December 10, on the *George Washington*, he explained his hope that territories conquered from the enemy, especially in backward portions of the world, should become the property of the League. 'Nothing stabilizes an institution so much,' he said, 'as the possession of property.' He argued at that time that these territories should be administered not by the Great Powers but by the smaller states, mentioning the Scandinavian in particular. [Notes made by C. S., December 10, 1918.]

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

If Germany was beaten, she would accept any terms. If she was not beaten he [President Wilson] did not wish to make terms with her.
Colonel House's Diary, October 15, 1918

I

WHILE President Wilson was on his way to Magnolia to discuss with Colonel House the first American draft of the Covenant, significant debates were taking place at the German General Headquarters at Spa. There were gathered the dignitaries, political and military, of the Central Powers: the Kaiser, von Hindenburg, Ludendorff, von Hertling, the Chancellor, and von Hintze, the new Foreign Secretary. On August 14 they were joined by the Emperor of Austria and his Foreign Minister, Burian.[1] Ludendorff confessed that he had given up hope of a crushing military triumph. The great German offensive of the spring had been stopped; Foch had taken the initiative and had driven the Germans back across the Marne and the Vesle. The British, on August 8, had begun an offensive which in his memoirs Ludendorff describes as the opening of 'the last phase.'

'I reviewed the military situation,' writes Ludendorff, 'the condition of the army, and the position of our allies, and explained that it was no longer possible by an offensive to force the enemy to sue for peace. Defense alone could hardly achieve this object, and so the termination of the war would have to be brought about by diplomacy. . . . The Emperor was very calm . . . and instructed him [the Foreign Secretary] to open up peace negotiations, if possible, through the medium of the Queen of the Netherlands.' [2]

[1] Czernin had resigned in April, following the disclosure of the secret peace negotiations with Prince Sixtus.

[2] *Ludendorff's Own Story*, II, 334–35.

No mention was made of surrender during the deliberations of the Crown Council. The powers given to von Hintze were limited by the maintenance of the war aims established in view of victory. Marshal Hindenburg expressed his hope that 'it would be possible to remain fixed on French territory, and thereby in the end enforce our will upon the enemy.' [1] But the military tide had plainly turned. It was with difficulty that the Austrians were persuaded not to issue a direct appeal to the belligerents for peace. Ludendorff complains in his memoirs of the sinking morale of the German nation behind the lines. The advance of the Allies continued. During the last of August and early September they pushed the Germans to the Aisne; the Franco-American attack of September 12 cleared the St. Mihiel salient; the Franco-British attack of September 22 pierced the Hindenburg line between St. Quentin and Cambrai. Ludendorff warned the Foreign Minister that there was no chance of victory by a sudden 'come-back.' On the 10th of September Hindenburg used the word 'immediate' in connection with the necessity of negotiations.[2]

As yet, however, the German leaders failed to realize how close the army and nation were to collapse. The Allied leaders were even further from that realization. They were without reliable information as to what was going on behind the lines in Germany. For all they knew the German forces might be retiring, as in 1917, to prepared positions from which they could be driven only by months of costly attacks. With the knowledge we now possess there was every reason for Allied optimism, but at the moment no one knew how long the Germans could hold out. On September 12 Lord Reading cabled to Wiseman from London, for House's information:

[1] *Preliminary History of the Armistice: Official Documents Published by the German National Chancellery by Order of the Ministry of State*, 19.
[2] *Ibid.*, 27.

'The general view among military chiefs in France is that with great effort the war might be ended in 1919 and that all energy should be concentrated in this direction. A definite policy to this effect has not yet been recorded or even agreed between all the Allies, but tendencies are in this direction.'

Only a week later there came news from the Macedonian front which suddenly inspired even the most cautious of Allied leaders with the feeling that their case was better than they had dared to hope. On September 17 the Allied forces north of Salonika attacked the Bulgars and Germans, drove them from defenses which had been reckoned impregnable, and in two days put them to headlong flight.

Since the early spring of 1918 the British and French had watched the increasing discontent of Bulgaria, and at various times entered into plans for arranging a separate peace. These failing, they had urged the United States to declare war upon the Bulgarians. 'It would be a severe blow to their confidence in the future,' Mr. Balfour cabled to House, 'if they once realized clearly that they were counted among the enemies of America.' The President desired to avoid a declaration of war. He laid emphasis upon the traditional American-Bulgar friendship, and he failed to see the value of a declaration as propaganda; would it not rather reaffirm the loyalty of the wavering Bulgarian people? On September 18 Sir William Wiseman brought to House another message from Mr. Balfour:

'You may inform the President for his personal and most confidential information that a general offensive is about to take place on the Macedonian front, and that it would, in my opinion, be of value if a threat could be conveyed to Bulgaria without delay, so as to weaken Bulgarian morale and resistance before the offensive matures.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *September* 18, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing a telegram which has just come from Mr. Balfour to Wiseman.

There is a feeling in Entente circles that the Bulgarian Government are much strengthened by being able to announce that they are friends with the United States, and that the one thing they are afraid of is a declaration of war by the United States. They tell their countrymen that they have not only secured territorial expansion at the expense of Serbia and Greece but they have done so while keeping on good terms with the United States, which will mean after war reconstruction and financing.

If you desire to make a threat I would suggest that you give it as wide publicity in Bulgaria as possible, so that the effect desired on the people may be had. The Government would naturally conceal it if possible.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

But military events marched so rapidly that action by the United States was unnecessary. The entire Bulgarian front crumbled. German control in southeastern Europe was broken. The Salonika 'side-show' justified itself. On September 26 a Bulgarian officer appearing under a flag of truce at the headquarters of General Milne, commander of British forces in Macedonia, was referred to General Franchet d'Esperey, the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces. He asked for a suspension of hostilities for forty-eight hours. The French general refused the armistice but agreed to receive authorized Bulgarian delegates. In the mean time the Bulgarian Minister at The Hague appealed to the American Minister to ask Wilson to use his good offices as intermediary

to obtain an armistice. The message reached Washington while President Wilson was on his way to New York, where he was to make his Liberty Loan speech; it was telephoned to Colonel House.

'*September* 27, 1918: I met the Presidential party at 1.20,' wrote House in his diary. 'There was a great throng around the Pennsylvania Station when we arrived, and a greater one when the President came out. We drove directly to the Waldorf Hotel, but before we left the train I had an opportunity to tell him of the Bulgarian *débâcle*. He was intensely interested. Gordon had read me all the cables over the telephone from Washington, and we brought the President to our apartment so that he might have them read to him over the private wire. . . .

'In coming up I had told the President of Lansing's idea that he should reply [to the appeal of the Bulgarian Minister] by saying he would intercede for an armistice, provided the Bulgarians would evacuate Serbia and permit the Allies access to Bulgaria in the event it was necessary to help Bulgaria defend her territory against the Central Powers. The President sat down at the desk and wrote the following:

'"'Appreciate the confidence reposed in me and am willing to urge an armistice upon the Entente if Bulgarian Government will agree now that the immediate terms of peace pending the final determinations of the general peace conference shall include the evacuation by the Bulgarian forces of Serbia and Macedonia and the Epirus and permission to the Entente Allies to enter Bulgaria if and when necessary to defend her territory against the Central Powers.

W. W."

'The President handed this to me for my opinion. I thought we did not know enough about conditions to specify the terms. Not only that, no Bulgarian Government would dare go before their people having accepted such terms. I

advised telling them he would be willing to act as they desired, provided they would leave it to his judgment as to the terms of the armistice.

'He argued the matter for a few minutes, saying he was afraid it would look like leaving too much to him. I replied that they would prefer this rather than having to consent to such terms as he had outlined; that the Government could go before the Bulgarian people claiming that he, the President, had not been fair with them; that they had reposed confidence in him believing he was a friend of Bulgaria. In other words, they would make whatever excuse they liked to their people. The President saw the force of this argument and wrote the following:

'"I appreciate the confidence reposed in me and am willing to urge an armistice upon the Entente if the Bulgarian Government will authorize me to say that the conditions of the armistice are left to me for decision and that the Bulgarian Government will accept the conditions I impose. Otherwise, I should not be hopeful of result of mediation on my part at this juncture in so vital a matter."'

The Bulgarian troops, however, were in such a hurry to surrender that they lacked time to avail themselves of the good offices of Wilson for which their Minister at The Hague had asked. On September 28 two Bulgarian delegates presented themselves at Franchet d'Esperey's headquarters and accepted terms which amounted to unconditional surrender: the demobilization of their army, evacuation of all Greek and Serbian territory, Bulgarian territory to be available for Allied operations and her means of transport placed at the disposal of the Allies, strategic points to be occupied by British, French, or Italian troops. On September 30 these terms were ratified by the Allied Governments, and the armistice was signed at Salonika

II

The downfall of Bulgaria threatened to open Austria-Hungary to the Allied advance, which during the succeeding weeks was rapidly pushed forward. It was accompanied by the good news of Allenby's victorious progress in Syria. Already on September 16 Austria had put forth a direct appeal for peace, immediately refused by Wilson because it included no definite statement of terms; it marked the increasing desperation of the Hapsburg Government. Germany's allies were breaking or had already given up the struggle.

The continued success of Allied armies, together with the increasing hope of a sudden German collapse, inevitably raised once more the problem of war aims. Colonel House recognized clearly the existence in Europe of a spirit quite inconsistent with Wilson's Fourteen Points, and he knew that strong pressure would be brought upon the Entente Governments to capitalize victory and to impose upon Germany crushing terms of peace. There was the danger that public opinion would be intoxicated by military triumph to such an extent that the promises of a just peace which Wilson had guaranteed would be forgotten.

During the summer very marked difference between the Allies and the United States developed regarding the economic policy to be adopted towards Germany after the war. President Wilson was well aware of the power of the economic weapons which the victorious Allies and America might utilize, and he was anxious to keep in line with the Allies so that politically an undivided front might be presented to the enemy; but he was convinced that to threaten Germany at this juncture would, in the diplomatic sense, be as unwise as the continuation of 'the war after the war' would be unjust. As Wiseman wrote later: 'He viewed with alarm the rising feeling among the Allies which was being communicated to the United States, that Germany should

be crushed economically after the war. Wilson and House foresaw the futility and danger of this policy, which was not realized until much later by the Allied leaders.' Hence the President asked Colonel House to intimate as much unofficially to the British Government. This House did through a cable which he and Wiseman prepared and which was sent over the name of the latter to Lord Reading.

Sir William Wiseman to Lord Reading

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 16, 1918

The President has asked me to cable you regarding the economic policy of the Allies toward Germany. He had understood that the Allied Governments decided they would not officially endorse the punitive trade policy advocated by the Paris Conference. He was disturbed, therefore, on reading the reports of Mr. Lloyd George's speech of July 31st to the National Union of Manufacturers, which seemed to recommend the crushing of Germany's trade after the war. I gather that the President's views on the subject are substantially as follows:

He fully appreciates the value of the economic weapon which the Allies, particularly Great Britain and the United States, possess, and he is in favour of using that weapon to the full in order to bring Germany to her senses and to secure that a just peace when signed will be scrupulously observed. He is convinced, however, that it is a great mistake to threaten Germany now with any kind of punitive post-war measures against her trade. In his view this threat is one of the strongest levers with which the German militarists suppress the growth of any Liberal movement in Germany. They point out, he thinks, to their people that the Allies, especially Great Britain, are manifestly jealous of Germany's commercial position, and that if the Allies are

not forced to accept a German peace they will crush Germany's trade. The President thinks we ought to adopt the line that we have no desire to deny Germany her fair share of the world's commerce, and that it is her own militarists who are ruining her trade by prolonging the war and obliging us to maintain a blockade. It is true that the Allies will come to the Peace Conference practically controlling the supply of the world's raw material, but there will be no need to advertise that fact or to threaten any one. Every one — especially the Germans — will be quite aware of the facts. For your own private information, I may tell you that the President will try to get Congress to give powers to the Executive to control American raw-material exports for a period of years after peace. While this would not be openly aimed at Germany, it would be a formidable weapon for the United States to bring to the Peace Conference.

The President hopes you will take this up with the Prime Minister so that Great Britain and the United States can arrive at some common policy on this important and far-reaching question.

Colonel House says he fears that if the Allies persist in making similar statements regarding their economic policy, the President will feel obliged, as he did once before,[1] to make some statement disassociating this country with that policy.

WISEMAN

It was obvious that this divergence of opinion between the Allies and the United States regarding economic policy was merely an indication of a fundamental difference of attitude towards the principles of the peace settlement as a whole. It was important that before Germany became helpless some arrangement should be reached. During the spring and summer Colonel House had remained convinced of the unwisdom of pressing the Allies to accept Wilson's earlier statement of

[1] See Volume III, p. 364.

peace conditions, lest the controversy which might result should injure the coöperation of effort that was essential if German defeat were to be assured. But by early September House reached the conclusion that it was time to make an attempt to secure Allied approval of Wilson's terms. He laid especial stress upon the value of agreeing upon a League of Nations, which he contended might be a going concern when the Peace Conference gathered.

Colonel House's personal fondness for Clemenceau, which later ripened into real friendship, did not blind him to the fact that the 'Father of Victory' was not likely to sympathize with the Wilsonian programme, and his admiration for those qualities in Lloyd George which had stiffened the determination of the Entente in the black days of the spring did not remove his fear that the British Prime Minister might yield to reactionary demands in Great Britain.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
September 3, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Do you not think the time has come for you to consider whether it would not be wise to try to commit the Allies to some of the things for which we are fighting?

As the Allies succeed, your influence will diminish. This is inevitable. By the time of the Peace Conference you will be nearing the end of your second term and this too will be something of a challenge to those, both at home and abroad, who have the will to oppose you. Therefore I believe that you should commit the Allies now to as much of your programme as possible. It is not probable that the personnel of the Allied Governments will be changed if things continue to go well. . . . This would mean a hostile rather than a sympathetic membership.

While the liberals are largely with you at present, I have a

feeling that you are not so strong among Labor circles of either France or England as you were a few months ago. Such support, in the nature of things, is uncertain and erratic, and I do not believe will be steadfast or powerful enough to compel the reactionaries in authority to yield at the Peace Conference to American aims.

Could not a plan be thought out by which the Entente would be committed to certain things for which we stand and which are so essential, from our point of view, to the reconstruction of the world?

If the group I have mentioned come to the Congress flushed with victory, no appeal that you can make over their heads will be successful. In each country there will be men of vision and loftiness of purpose who will rally to your support, but they will be in the minority and their voices will be heard faintly by the great exultant throng intoxicated not alone by victory but by the thought of freedom from war.

If you read what Sir William Tyrrell said . . . in the recent letters I sent you, you will be interested in his argument for forming a League of Nations now. It is not what Tyrrell says that impresses me so much as the thought of what may be done at this time with a League of Nations and kindred things which may not be possible of accomplishment at the Peace Conference.

To agree with France, England, Italy, and Japan upon the Covenant for a League of Nations would not prevent its incorporation into the peace treaty. It would rather make it the more certain. The Central Powers could not object to a statement by the Allies as to a League of Nations and their conception of what it should be, and stating at the same time that they would propose its incorporation in the peace treaty. If such a document as we have in mind should be accepted and made public, it could not have any but a good effect in the Central Powers and should shorten the war. If the Cove-

nant were published in agreement with England, France, Italy, and Japan, there would be no opposition in this country worth mentioning.

If you are to take your Western trip, many things could be said in your speeches to clear the way for further action. I shall hope to be in Washington before you leave and to talk these things over in person.

With deep affection,

Devotedly yours

E. M. House

President Wilson did not allow himself to be shaken from his determination not to proceed to an agreement upon the specific terms of a constitution for a League. But he was impressed by House's argument that the time had come to pledge the Allies to his principles and to the renunciation of imperialistic peace proposals. He pondered means by which this could be accomplished. Direct negotiations with the British and French for such a purpose, which was the method House had in mind, he discarded. After a delay of three weeks he summoned House to Washington, to discuss the possibility of an address which would define the principles of a desirable peace settlement and to which the Allies might be invited to give their approval. Colonel House noted in his diary on September 24 the gist of his talk with the President.

'I am just back from Washington. When I arrived there Sunday morning and had had breakfast, the President came to my room. . . .

'He had been thinking, he said, of the letter I wrote him from Magnolia September 3, and he had written a speech which he thought would cover the case provided he could get the Allies to agree to it. He wished me to read the speech so

as to get my judgment of it and also as to when and where it should be delivered. He said Benjamin Strong, of the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, had asked him to open the Liberty Loan drive with a speech in New York, but he had declined because he did not consider it a suitable occasion. He was wondering if the Economic Club of New York would do.

'I thought the Liberty Loan drive would be an admirable occasion. It could be arranged for Friday night of this week. He could devote one sentence to the Liberty Loan, telling how necessary it was to raise the money because this country had in mind certain things which should be done to prevent future wars. He could then launch out on his subject and not refer to the loan again. It could be done as he did it in Baltimore last spring.

'The President agreed to this and asked me to make arrangements. We discussed who should speak with him, the length of time his speech should take, when it should begin and when it should end.

'After lunch the President and I went to his library, where he read his speech. . . . He gave me the speech to read again on Monday, after he had made changes, and it seemed to me without objections excepting one word, for which he substituted another. The address concerns the League of Nations and, while he does not go into it to the core, he makes it clear the kind of league we must have.

'We discussed the sentiment for this measure as it exists throughout the world. I had some data upon this subject which I gave him to read aloud. In addition I had the French conception of what a league should be, which he had not seen. . . .

'The President spoke of politics in general and expressed an earnest desire that a Democratic Congress should be elected. He said he intended making a speech or writing a letter about two weeks before the elections, asking the

people to return a Democratic House. I did not express any opinion as to the wisdom of this.[1] . . .

'After dinner Sunday night, we talked of history, literature, art, and what influences brought forth the best. The President called attention to the fact that when Italy was broken up into small kingdoms and republics, literature and art flourished best, and that in England during the Elizabethan period, when the country had become stabilized but when adventure was still rife, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did their best work. We wondered what was in store for America in this direction and when it would come, if ever.

'*September* 25, 1918: I telephoned Frank Cobb and asked him to come by this morning, in order to discuss the kind of editorial that should be written after the President's Liberty Loan address.'

Wilson's speech of September 27 was given as planned, at the Metropolitan Opera House, as the opening of the

[1] When House advised with the President, silence invariably expressed dissent. Nothing more was said to House about this, and he was on the Atlantic when the appeal was issued. On October 25 he wrote in his diary:

'I have been greatly disturbed by the President's appeal for a Democratic Congress. All he says is true, but it is a political error to appeal for a partisan Congress. If he had asked the voters to support members of Congress and the Senate who had supported the American war aims, regardless of party, he would be in a safe position. In this way he would avoid partisan feeling and would win no matter which party controlled Congress, provided those selected had been loyal to our war aims. Here again, the President has taken a great gamble. If it turns out well, he will be acclaimed a bold and forceful leader; if it turns out badly, an opposite view will be taken.

'It seems to me a needless venture, and if I had been at home I should have counseled against it. He mentioned, the last time I was in Washington, that he thought of making an appeal. I made no reply, which always indicates to him my disapproval. As a matter of fact, we were so absorbed with the German notes that I brushed the question aside and gave it but little attention. I am sorry now that I did not discuss it with him to a finish.'

Liberty Loan drive. Governor Benjamin Strong presided. It proved to be a speech only second in importance to that of the Fourteen Points. It was directed in part against the military rulers of Germany, in part against Allied imperialists, in part as an appeal to the German people. It was at about this time that the propaganda, directed by Northcliffe and based upon the President's speeches, began to have its effect in Germany; discontent spread from behind the lines up to the troops in the trenches, as Ludendorff's memoirs make plain. At the time, those in Allied countries could only speculate as to what the effect of the propaganda might be.

President Wilson began his speech by insisting upon the need of clarifying war issues, which must be settled 'with a full and unequivocal acceptance of the principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interest of the strongest.' There could be no bargain or compromise with the Governments of the Central Empires. 'We cannot "come to terms" with them.' But the Allies also must realize that obligations rested upon them:

'If it be indeed and in truth,' said Wilson, 'the common object of the Governments associated against Germany and of the nations whom they govern, as I believe it to be, to achieve by the coming settlements a secure and lasting peace, it will be necessary that all who sit down at the peace table shall come ready and willing to pay the price, the only price, that will procure it; and ready and willing, also, to create in some virile fashion the only instrumentality by which it can be made certain that the agreements of the peace will be honored and fulfilled.

'That price is impartial justice in every item of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed; and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with. That indispensable

instrumentality is a League of Nations formed under covenants that will be efficacious. . . . And, as I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, is in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself.'

The President then went on to a redefinition of the underlying principles, stated in view of the special circumstances of the moment:

'First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favorites and knows no standard but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

'Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

'Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the league of nations.

'Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special, selfish economic combinations within the league and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

'Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.'

The President concluded with an appeal to the Allied leaders which he evidently hoped might fulfill the purpose that House had in mind when he urged steps to win their acquiescence in Wilsonian principles:

'I believe that the leaders of the Governments with which we are associated will speak as they have occasion, as plainly as I have tried to speak. I hope that they will feel free to say whether they think that I am in any degree mistaken in my interpretation of the issues involved or in my purpose with regard to the means by which a satisfactory settlement of those issues may be obtained. Unity of purpose and of counsel are as imperatively necessary in this war as was unity of command in the battlefield. . . .'

'*September* 27, 1918: Governor Strong called for the President at 8.15,' wrote House in his diary, 'and our entire party motored to the Metropolitan Opera House. It was an historic occasion. The house was beautifully decorated, and was crowded with the most important people of New York, including the Governor of the State and other officials. Governor Strong made an excellent speech. . . . He did not finish writing his speech until late this afternoon and yet he delivered it with but few references to his notes. Not being a public speaker, this seemed to me quite a feat of memory.

'The President read his address. Most of it seemed somewhat over the heads of his audience, the parts which were unimportant bringing the most vigorous applause.

'We are all wondering how the press will receive it. After the speaking the President asked me to ride with him to the Waldorf. We went to the sitting-room and discussed the address for some minutes. He was flushed with excitement and altogether pleased with the day's effort.'

The applause given the President's speech during its delivery was echoed throughout the country, but generally with the same lack of discrimination that House observed. America was naturally teeming with the emotions of war and feared above everything else to be caught in a German 'peace-trap.' Hence it rejoiced when the President declared

that there could be no bargaining with those in power in Germany, and looked upon the rest of the speech as rather abstract. Abroad, liberal leaders were enthusiastic and more discriminating. Lord Grey sent messages of warm congratulation to House, and Lord Robert Cecil despatched a special cable.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *September* 28, 1918

If not improper I should be very glad if you could convey to President Wilson my personal deep appreciation of his speech of last night. It is, if I may say so, the finest description of our war aims yet uttered, and will give us all renewed courage to face horrors of war.

ROBERT CECIL

Any approval of Wilson's speech of September 27 expressed by Allied leaders was merely unofficial. The address helped to crystallize public opinion upon liberal war aims, and it was ultimately accepted, together with the speech of the Fourteen Points, as expressing the principles of the peace settlement to which both the Allies and Germany agreed. But so far as the speech was designed to secure an immediate unification of Allied policy, it failed, for the Entente Powers took no step to endorse officially Wilson's statement of policy. Some days later the London *Daily News* pleaded for such an endorsement:

'It is unfortunate that this critical moment finds the Allies without an agreed and declared policy, and within the last week or two that obvious requirement has been put forward in quarters hitherto hostile to a declaration of aims. . . . We can no longer dwell in the atmosphere of vague phrases. We must say whether President Wilson speaks for

us or for himself alone. . . . There is no policy before the world except that of the President, and there is no other policy that would be tolerated by the democracy of any allied country. Its immediate endorsement is vital.' [1]

Another month passed, however, before the European Allies finally agreed to accept Wilsonian principles as the basis of the peace, and then only after prolonged negotiations with Colonel House as the President's representative. The event which compelled the Allies and the United States to reach agreement was the German demand for an armistice.

III

For some weeks the German Foreign Secretary had been vainly seeking the mediation of a neutral Power through whom peace negotiations might be inaugurated. As the desperate nature of the military situation was realized, the German military authorities themselves approved the suggestion that President Wilson should be approached.[2] On October 1, Ludendorff urged haste: 'To-day the troops are holding their own; what may happen to-morrow cannot be foreseen. . . . The line might be broken at any moment and then our proposal would come at the most unfavorable time. . . . Our proposal must be forwarded immediately from Berne to Washington. The army could not wait forty-eight hours longer.'[3]

At Berlin a new Government was in process of formation under the chancellorship of Prince Max of Baden and with

[1] *Daily News* editorial, October 8, 1918.

[2] On September 21, Lersner telegraphed from General Headquarters to the Foreign Office: 'General Ludendorff has asked me whether Your Excellency intended to approach America on the subject of peace negotiations through Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg at Berne.' *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 34.

[3] *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 40, 41, 42.

the approval of the Reichstag. The Prince was something of a parlor liberal, and the concurrence of the Reichstag gave to the new Government a sort of parliamentary similitude, which, it was hoped, would satisfy Wilson's demand for the overthrow of the old German régime. Prince Max, who formally became Chancellor on October 4, was confused by the sharpness of the army's demand for peace, which was reiterated even before the parliamentary crisis was settled. He asked for delay. But the High Command was all the more insistent for immediate negotiations. On October 3, Hindenburg telegraphed to Max: 'The situation is daily growing more acute and may force the Supreme Army Command to very serious decisions. Under these circumstances it is imperative to bring the struggle to an end in order to spare the German people and their allies useless sacrifice. Every day's delay costs the lives of thousands of brave soldiers.' [1]

The Chancellor yielded and on October 5 sent through the Swiss Government a note to President Wilson, urging him to invite the belligerents to enter peace negotiations on the basis of the Fourteen Points and to conclude an armistice at once. The Austro-Hungarian Government associated itself with the German plea.

Colonel House received the news by telephone from Washington, with a request from the President for his advice. It was hard to believe that the demand for an armistice really meant that the Germans were ready to surrender, despite their offer to accept the Fourteen Points and subsequent conditions of Wilson; it was impossible to grant an armistice without adequate guarantees that it would not be used to save the German army. Yet an abrupt refusal might stiffen the waning determination of the German people and prolong the war unnecessarily. House replied to Wilson's request

[1] *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 48.

with a telegram and a letter. The President had already intimated that he expected to send him to Paris at once to take part in Allied deliberations.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, *October* 6, 1918

I would suggest making no direct reply to the German note. A statement from the White House saying, 'The President will at once confer with the Allies regarding the communication received from the German Government,' should be sufficient.

I would advise that you ask the Allies to confer with me in Paris at the earliest opportunity. I have a feeling that they will want to throw the burden on you,[1] but I hope to be able to show them how unwise this would be. They should accept their full responsibility.

If the Entente permit this opportunity to go by and if the German resistance should stiffen, I am confident that there would be such a demand for peace this winter in those countries that their Governments would be compelled to give Germany better terms than could now be made.

EDWARD HOUSE

NEW YORK, *October* 6, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It is stirring news that comes to-day. An armistice such as the Germans and Austrians ask for seems to me impossible, and yet a refusal should be couched in such terms as to leave the advantage with you.

If you could get the Central Powers to accept the terms of the note which you sent from here to Bulgaria, it would, I

[1] Colonel House was in error in this supposition. The diary of Sir Henry Wilson indicates that the Allies feared rather lest President Wilson might make decisions without consultation with them.

believe, place you in the best possible position. The Germans will want immediate action and will probably suggest many expedients looking to an early preliminary conference. Our position, I think, should be one of delay without seeming so.

With Foch hammering on the West and with you driving the diplomatic wedge deeper, it is within the range of possibilities that the war may be over by the end of the year. . . .[1]

With deep affection, I am

Your devoted

E. M. House

Opinion was general that the German offer was a trap designed to catch Wilson in a 'negotiated peace,' which would save Germany from defeat. The American press spoke of it almost unanimously as a 'maneuver.' Despatches from abroad indicated that Allied opinion expected and hoped that the President would send back a brusque refusal to consider an armistice. 'Germany's peace offer,' said the *Tribune*, October 8, 'was peremptorily spurned to-day in the Senate. In spirited discussion of the latest enemy proposals, Senators participating in a two hours' debate declared it an insidious attack and voiced a demand for its immediate rejection. . . . The speakers were unanimous in declaring that a crushing military victory must be preliminary to peace negotiations.' Little did the Senators realize that on the testimony of the German High Command the Allies had already won the victory.

'Don't you think,' suggested Senator Lodge, 'that the plain English of it is that an armistice now would mean the loss of the war?' 'I do not think that is too strong a statement,' replied Senator Poindexter.

[1] House had just received a cable from Frazier, of October 5, who reported of an interview with Foch: 'The Marshal seemed delighted . . . and said, "We are on the slope of victory, and victory has sometimes a way of galloping."'

On Monday, October 7, House received by telephone a call to Washington. He left the same afternoon and arrived in the capital to find the President troubled, keenly aware of the danger of weakening the military position of the Allies by failing to secure adequate guarantees, but determined not to destroy the chance of negotiations through a categoric refusal to consider Germany's request. House emphasized the need of insisting upon the most ironclad guarantees from Germany, before agreeing to take up the question of an armistice with the Allies. He summarized the discussion in his diary of October 9:

'I arrived at the White House as the clock was striking nine o'clock. . . . The President met me and we went into his study. He said he had asked Lansing to come over and he arrived within a few minutes. The President had prepared his reply to the German Chancellor, Prince Maximilien of Baden, and read it to us.[1] He seemed much disturbed when I expressed a decided disapproval of it. I did not believe the country would approve of what he had written. After arguing the matter some half hour or more, he said that I might be able to write something and embody what I had in mind, but he had to confess his inability to do so. . . .

'After breakfast on Tuesday, Dr. Grayson came in with the expectation of playing golf with the President. When I had finished breakfast, the President appeared and announced that he had given up the idea of going out and asked me to go with him to his study. We read what the papers had to say; I called attention to what the French Socialists' Convention said upon the subject in Paris, and the comments of the Manchester *Guardian* and London *Daily*

[1] 'The President's first draft of a reply to Germany was mild in tone and did not emphasize the need of guarantees providing for thoroughgoing acceptance of Wilson's peace conditions.' This sentence is found in a memorandum later [1922] drafted by Colonel House.

News.[1] He, on his part, read me the debate which took place in the Senate Monday.

'He then began to amend his draft and before he finished with it the next day, there was not much left of the original. He worked on it steadily until nearly one o'clock Monday night. I then suggested we leave it until morning. He replied that he had thought of playing golf, as he had had no exercise either on Sunday or Monday and was feeling the need of it. I advised him to go to the links, and disagreed with him as to the necessity for haste in giving an answer. He evidently wished to have it ready for the Tuesday morning papers if possible, and certainly not later than the editions Tuesday afternoon.

'I took this occasion to tell him I thought his answer to the last Austrian note was a mistake, not only in the celerity with which it was answered but also the manner of it. He said, 'What would you have done?" I replied that I would have answered it in some such way as his speech in New York, September 27. . . .

'I found the President's viewpoint had changed during the night. . . . He did not seem to realize before, the nearly unanimous sentiment in this country against anything but unconditional surrender.[2] He did not realize how war-mad

[1] Both represented the liberal opinion in England from which Wilson expected to draw support. The *Daily News* editorial chimed closely with Wilson's own thoughts: 'President Wilson has insisted that no peace can be made which rests on the word of the military rulers of Germany. . . . Prince Max . . . asks the President, in effect, to treat not with the Kaiser and Ludendorff but with the people of Germany. . . . Militarism and the doctrine of might are repudiated, and moral law is accepted as the gospel of international relationships. President Wilson and the Allies will want guarantees of the reality of this vast revolution. . . . The world will await the reply of President Wilson with confidence in its wisdom. . . .' On the other hand the diary of Sir Henry Wilson makes clear that such confidence was by no means universal. 'Am certain,' he wrote on October 6, 'that a few good home truths would do the President good.' Callwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, II, 134.

[2] In support of this view the New York *Times*, on October 8, published a despatch from London: 'Any idea that the proposal for an armistice

our people have become. This had to be taken into consideration, but not, of course, to the extent of meeting it where it was wrong.

'The President thought if such an offer had been made by a reputable government, it would be impossible to decline it. After he had gotten the note into its final form, he suggested sending for Tumulty to try it out on him. Tumulty had just written the President urging that he should not give in in any particular but make a decided refusal. Tumulty's letter and the note were not in harmony, and we were therefore anxious to see what he would think of it.[1] Much to the surprise of both of us, Tumulty thought the country would accept the note favorably, not enthusiastically at first, but that it would appeal to the sober-minded and, later, to every one.

'The President was not happy over this effort. . . . That it has taken with the public as well as it has, makes me content.'

The reply did not indeed fulfill expectations. On Tuesday morning the New York *Times* announced: 'The reply of President Wilson to the Austro-German peace proposals will be a decided rejection, in the convinced opinion of Washington.' Wilson did not, however, reject the proposal; he intimated rather that the United States was ready to consider it seriously, only the Central Powers must first furnish adequate guarantees: a clear-cut agreement to accept the Fourteen Points and subsequent addresses of the President as the basis of the peace; the assurance that the Chancellor

could find favorable consideration for a moment in Washington is scouted. According to *The Evening News*, both Lloyd George and Clemenceau are of the opinion that the proposal to suspend military operations, which is regarded everywhere as impelled by military necessity, and a scheme by which Germany hoped to be able to extricate and regroup her armies, ought to have been addressed to Marshal Foch. . . .'

[1] Mr. Tumulty's letter is published in his *Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him*, 315.

spoke in the name of the German people and not of those who so far had been responsible for the conduct of the war; finally, evacuation of invaded territories.

President Wilson has often been praised, notably by André Tardieu, for the political astuteness with which he met the German peace offer, an offer designed by Ludendorff, at least, as a means to save the German army. It was, however, not so much astuteness as a simple adherence to his principles. This doctrinaire method defeated the more experienced diplomats of the Central Powers and had all the effects of diplomatic finesse. The negotiations were maintained and nothing of military value was conceded to Germany.

IV

The best evidence that simplicity may be regarded as a capital virtue in diplomacy is to be found in the consternation that greeted the reception of Wilson's note in German Headquarters. The Ministers, having started negotiations, did not, in view of the popular demand for peace, dare break them off. But the Army Command, which had demanded their inauguration evidently hoping that Wilson would agree at once to an armistice, were embarrassed. A breathing-space they must have, but they were not prepared to yield to the conditions which Wilson seemed to suggest.

'I do not fear a catastrophe,' said Colonel Heye, with the approval of Ludendorff, 'but I want to save the army, so that we can use it as a means of pressure during the peace negotiations.' [1]

Thus the German army leaders confessed what the Allies suspected: the Germans wanted an armistice in order to save time, troops, and supplies. Scarcely veiled, this hope appeared in the answer to Wilson's note which the Germans sent on October 12. They accepted all three of the Presi-

[1] *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 55.

dent's conditions, but as to the process of evacuation they suggested that there should be preliminary negotiations which ought to be handled by a mixed commission. Herein lay the trap. If the President agreed to suspend hostilities while the mixed commission debated the conditions of evacuation, Ludendorff would have time to withdraw his armies and escape the devastating pressure of Foch. The snare was laid in full view; even American inexperience in European diplomacy was not deceived.

President Wilson had come to New York the day before the German reply was sent, and the news of it reached him while at dinner on the 13th. To the Colonel it seemed clear that Germany was delivered into Allied hands, since after going so far the German leaders could not draw back, no matter what conditions the President might impose.

'*October* 13, 1918: We dined with the President and Mrs. Wilson at the Waldorf Hotel,' wrote House in his diary. 'Just before dinner was announced, Tumulty came in with the news that Germany had accepted the President's terms. The Military Intelligence Bureau had telephoned it over from Washington. We wondered whether the news was authentic, but concluded from its construction that it was. When we went in to the table the President wrote me a little note in which he said, "Tell Mrs. W." and signed it "W. W." . . .

'After dinner we went almost immediately to the Italian Fête at the Metropolitan Opera House. There was an enormous crowd which cheered the President with much enthusiasm. I was so stirred by the news that had come from Berlin that I could not listen to the programme. Tumulty and I went to the Director's Room in the Opera House, called up Washington and received confirmation from Frank Polk and the Washington *Post*. Shortly after ten o'clock I returned home. . . . Frank Polk called over the telephone

at 10.30 (over the private wire), and we had a long talk. It was decided that Joe Grew should keep in touch with the Swiss Legation and let us know the official text as soon as it came.

'I did not try to sleep for a long while, for it seemed to me that the war was finished, certainly finished if we have the judgment to garner victory.'

House returned to Washington with the President, who regarded the moment as one of real crisis in the war and insisted on keeping House by his side for consultation. Mr. Wilson was determined to issue his reply without loss of time; every hour saved might also save innumerable lives. Wilson was clear that he would avoid any discussion with the Germans as to the technical question of evacuation; that must be left to Allied military leaders. Germany must not be allowed to maneuver into a position where she could renew the war. But the reply must be sufficiently encouraging to the Germans to bring negotiations to a successful and immediate culmination. Colonel House's diary records the President's point of view.

'*October* 15, 1918: Yesterday was one of the stirring days of my life. The President and I got together directly after breakfast. I never saw him more disturbed. He said he did not know where to make the entrance in order to reach the heart of the thing. He wanted to make his reply final so there would be no exchange of notes. It reminded him, he said, of a maze. If one went in at the right entrance, he reached the center, but if one took the wrong turning, it was necessary to go out again and do it over. He said that many times in making extemporaneous speeches he had gone into the wrong entrance and had to flounder out as best he could. . . .

'I thought he should make one condition to a discussion

of armistice, and that was the immediate cessation of all atrocities both on land and sea. He agreed to this and it stands in the note.

'He went into the question of the German Government and decided to use what he said in his Fourth of July speech about autocracies. . . . We were anxious not to close the door, and yet desired to make the note as strong as the occasion required. He fell back time and again on the theory offered when the last note was written: that was, if Germany was beaten, she would accept any terms. If she was not beaten, he did not wish to make terms with her. At the same time, neither the President nor I desired to make a vengeful peace. Neither did he desire to have the Allied armies ravage Germany as Germany has ravaged the countries she has invaded. The President was especially insistent that no stain of this sort should rest upon the Allied arms. He is very fine in this feeling and I am sorry he is hampered in any way by the Allies and the vociferous outcry in this country. It is difficult to do the right thing in the right way with people clamoring for the undesirable and impossible.

'The President soon formulated the points which appear in the note, and he then decided to send for Lansing, Baker, and Daniels to hear their reactions. . . . Lansing and Baker arrived first and discussed the note for a half hour before Daniels came. . . .'

Late in the afternoon of the 14th the note was sent. It did not follow the demand for 'unconditional surrender' which appeared in most of the Metropolitan and Eastern newspapers and on the floor of the Senate; but it outlined distinctly the guarantees which were necessary before Wilson would pass the request for an armistice on to the Allies. There could be no mixed commission to negotiate the terms of evacuation. That 'must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the

United States and the allied Governments.' No armistice would be granted which did not provide 'absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees of the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and of the Allies in the field.' No armistice would be granted so long 'as the armed forces of Germany continue the illegal and inhuman practices which they persist in.' The note concluded with the warning that the whole character of the peace would depend upon the character of the German Government. 'It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing.'

'In a single page,' writes Tardieu, 'the whole poor scaffolding of the German Great General Staff is overthrown. The armistice and peace are not to be means of delaying a disaster and of preparing revenge. On the main question itself the reply must be Yes or No! If it is no, war will continue, as it has gone on for the last three months, by Allied victories. If it is yes, the military capitulation must be immediate and complete by the acceptance pure and simple of terms which will be fixed by the military advisers of the Allies alone.' [1]

Wilson's diplomacy compelled a categoric reply, and for a week the German leaders debated. Ludendorff, who had first demanded the armistice, now recoiled before the logical development of the situation. Brought to Berlin on the 17th, he asked for reënforcements.

'Before accepting the conditions of this note, which are too severe,' he told the Government, 'we should say to the enemy: Win such terms by fighting for them. . . . I believe now as before, that if it is in any way possible, we must bring

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 54.

about negotiations for an armistice. But we should only enter upon such armistice negotiations as will permit an orderly evacuation of the country — consequently a respite of at least two or three months. Further we should not accept any conditions that would appear to make the resumption of hostilities impossible. That this is the intention, we cannot fail to see from the note. The terms are meant to put us out of the fight. . . . We should not break off with Wilson abruptly. On the contrary say: "Just tell us, what are we to do anyway? If you demand anything that is contrary to our national honor, if you want to render us incapable of fighting, then the answer is certainly, No."' [1]

To Ludendorff's plea that acceptance of Wilson's note would leave Germany helpless, von Hindenburg added a warning sent by telephone to the Chancellor, on October 20: 'Even if we should be beaten, we should not really be worse off than if we were to accept everything at present.' [2]

But the Ministers thought otherwise. If, as the army chiefs had insisted, the situation was dangerous at the beginning of October, it was very much worse at the end of the month. The Ministers regarded Ludendorff's judgment as erratic. The Foreign Secretary wrote that he had received 'intimations from a most impartial source, according to which the hopes expressed yesterday by General Ludendorff are not shared even by his *entourage*.' [3] The concentric attack of Foch threatened a complete disaster to the retreating German armies. A fresh army was ready to launch an attack in Lorraine. There were no reënforcements for Ludendorff, no hope of raising the national morale so as to stage a 'back-to-the-wall' resistance of the German people. The Ministers decided to yield and on October 20

[1] *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 98–99. [2] *Ibid.*, 105.
[3] *Ibid.*, 104.

agreed to all of Wilson's conditions. The terms of the armistice would be left to the military advisers of the Allies; orders had been given to submarines to spare passenger ships, and to the retreating forces to respect private property; arbitrary power had been abolished in Germany and the Government was free from military influence. 'This time,' says Tardieu, 'Germany, bound hand and foot is rivetted to Wilsonian dialectics. Since she does not break, she gives herself up.' [1]

On October 23 the President communicated his correspondence with Germany to the Allies, at the same time repeating in a last note to Germany the fundamental conditions which she had accepted. It was now for the Allies, in conference at Paris and Versailles, to determine whether there should be an armistice and, if so, what its terms; to determine also whether, like Germany, they would agree to accept the Fourteen Points as the basis of the peace.

V

Colonel House was already nearing the shores of France when this final interchange of notes took place. Whether or not the war would end must depend upon the deliberations of the Supreme War Council, and it was vital that a political representative of the United States should sit in the approaching sessions. Since House's visit to Europe in November of the preceding year, the United States had been represented only in purely military questions, by General Bliss. As soon as it appeared probable that the correspondence with Germany would actually result in serious consideration of an armistice, President Wilson notified Colonel House that he was to leave at once for Versailles to represent the United States. He gave him a commission as 'Special Representative of the Government of the United States of America,' and also a letter appointing him the 'personal representative' of the President, a virtual power of attorney.

[1] Tardieu, *op. cit.*, 58.

14 October, 1918.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Edward M. House, the bearer of this letter, is my personal representative and I have asked him to take part as such in the conferences of the Supreme War Council and in any other conferences at which it may be serviceable for him to represent me. I commend him to the confidence of all representatives of the governments with which the Government of the United States is associated in the war.

Woodrow Wilson

WASHINGTON, *October* 14, 1918

To Whom It May Concern

Mr. Edward M. House, the bearer of this letter, is my personal representative and I have asked him to take part as such in the conferences of the Supreme War Council and in any other conferences in which it may be serviceable for him to represent me. I commend him to the confidence of all representatives of the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated in the war.

WOODROW WILSON

WASHINGTON, *October* 16, 1918

KNOW YE, That reposing special trust and confidence in the Integrity and Ability of Edward M. House, of Texas, I do appoint him a Special Representative of the Government of the United States of America in Europe in matters relating to the war, and do authorize and empower him to execute and fulfill the duties of this commission with all the powers and privileges thereunto of right appertaining during the pleasure of the President of the United States. . . .

WOODROW WILSON

Colonel House thus came to Europe with official standing and invested with all the authority of the President of the United States. It was as the official spokesman for Wilson and the American Government that he sat on the Supreme War Council with the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy. The mission upon which the President sent him was at once the most important and the most difficult of his career: he must maintain Wilsonian principles without causing a break in the political unanimity of the Allies and, if possible, without any loss of cordiality. Characteristically the President gave him no instructions of any kind, apparently certain that House understood exactly what was in his mind.

'I spoke of having arranged a secret code between us,' wrote House in his diary of his final conference with Wilson. 'As I was leaving he said, "I have not given you any instructions because I feel you will know what to do." I had been thinking of this before he spoke and wondered at the strange situation our relations had brought about. I am going on one of the most important missions any one ever undertook, and yet there is no word of direction, advice, or discussion between us. He knows that our minds are generally parallel, and he also knows that where they diverge I will follow his bent rather than my own. . . .'

CHAPTER IV

ARMISTICE CONFERENCES

. . . This being achieved, no man has the right to cause another drop of blood to be shed.

Marshal Foch to Colonel House, November 1, 1918

I

STORIES current at the time and since have laid upon President Wilson the responsibility for a premature peace. Except for his influence upon Allied leaders, it has been asserted, Foch would have led his triumphant armies across the Rhine and dictated peace in Berlin. It is a myth. What the President offered Germany in his October notes was not peace nor even an armistice, but merely the privilege of applying to the Allied and Associated Powers at Versailles for an armistice. That application he passed on without comment or advice. Wilson gave no instructions to House nor did he himself exercise any direct influence upon Allied leaders. He merely made peace possible by putting Germany's request before them. They were free to accept or refuse it. In the end it was the opinion of Marshal Foch himself that prevailed.

These facts have frequently been blurred, either through ignorance or malice, and the belief has been current that for some sinister purpose the United States sought to rob the Allies of victory by insisting upon the cessation of fighting, against the will of the Allied military commanders. This belief was expressed in an alleged interview with a distinguished writer, who was quoted as saying, 'America had forced the Allies into making peace at the first opportunity instead of insisting upon finishing in Berlin. America quit the day of the Armistice without waiting to see the thing

through.' Whether or not the quotation is exact, it represents the charge so often made by writers and speakers.

It is important to remember that on October 23, President Wilson turned over to the Allies the decision as to whether or not there should be an armistice. His note of that date reads: 'The President has, therefore, transmitted his correspondence with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, *if those Governments are disposed to effect peace* upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view.' In this note President Wilson left the Allies free to decide not to grant an armistice if they disapproved it. 'Then,' as General Bliss later wrote, 'was the time for the Allied Governments or any one of them to say "No, we are not disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated" and "we shall not ask our advisers to submit for our approval the necessary terms for such an armistice nor of any armistice." As a matter of fact, the Allied and Associated Powers immediately consulted their military advisers.' [1]

As he had indicated to President Wilson before leaving the United States, Colonel House was determined that the full responsibility for deciding upon an armistice should be

[1] Tasker H. Bliss, 'The Armistices,' in *The American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 512. This article is an authoritative and critical study of the drafting of the armistices, of inestimable value to the historian.

accepted by the Allies. It was with this in mind that in a conference of political and military leaders he put to Marshal Foch the famous question, Foch's answer to which is in itself a complete reply to the charges raised against America.

'Will you tell us, M. le Maréchal,' said House, 'solely from the military point of view, apart from any other consideration, whether you would prefer the Germans to reject or to sign the armistice as outlined here?'

'Fighting,' replied Foch, 'means struggling for certain results.[1] If the Germans now sign an armistice under the general conditions we have just determined, those results are in our possession. This being achieved, no man has the right to cause another drop of blood to be shed.' [2]

'One of the Prime Ministers,' writes Mantoux, 'I think it was Mr. Lloyd George, asked him what would happen if the Germans refused to sign, and how long it would take to drive them back across the Rhine. He answered, opening both arms, a familiar gesture with him: "Maybe three, maybe four or five months. Who knows?" He never alluded to a final blow in the next few days. When he brought from Versailles his draft of the military terms of the Armistice Convention he simply said this: "The terms your military advisers are agreed upon are those we should be in a position to enforce after the success of our next operations."

'There were discussions, of course, about details of the Convention, but there seemed to be perfect agreement both between the Allied Governments and between the soldiers and statesmen as to the desirability of concluding the armistice, provided, of course, that Germany accepted the

[1] '*On ne fait la guerre que pour ses résultats.*'

[2] Question and answer are quoted from a letter of Paul Mantoux to Colonel House, July 6, 1920. M. Mantoux was interpreter for the Supreme War Council, and later for the Council of Ten and the Council of Four at the Peace Conference.

conditions laid down, which amounted to little less than capitulation.' [1]

II

Colonel House arrived in Paris on October 26, and immediately set himself to discover the feeling of Allied leaders as to the reply that should be given the Germans. He realized that there were three different questions that must be answered. Should an armistice be granted on any terms to Germany? If the answer was in the affirmative, upon what terms should the armistice be accorded? Finally, were the Allies, like Germany, ready to accept President Wilson's Fourteen Points and later speeches as the basis for the peace? The third question was of quite a different nature from the first two, since it touched not the terms upon which fighting would stop but the ultimate settlement. The Allies could not avoid facing this last question, however, since the Germans had based their request for an armistice upon the understanding that Wilsonian principles would be taken as the foundation of the settlement.

The two days following House's arrival were packed with interviews, of which his diary gives a brief résumé:

'*October* 26, 1918: I do not know how I have lived through the day. I saw newspaper people at twelve o'clock and distinguished Americans and foreigners from hour to hour. Among them were H. P. Davison of the Red Cross, General Clarence Edwards, Ambassador Sharp, and an infinite number of others.

'Field Marshal Haig, Lord Milner, Secretary of State for War, Admiral Benson, and Robert Bacon, who is liaison officer between the British troops and ours, took lunch with me. It was a delightful and important meeting. . . . I find Milner moderate, and was surprised to find Haig equally so.

[1] Mantoux to House, July 6, 1920.

He does not consider the German military situation warrants their complete surrender. . . . I did a great deal of the talking. I desired to frame the case as the President wished it, and wanted to convince both Milner and Haig he was right, in order that we might have the benefit of their support on Tuesday.

'I saw Clemenceau at six o'clock. . . . He gave in the gravest confidence Marshal Foch's terms for an armistice. No one had seen the document excepting himself, not even the President of the French Republic. He asked that it be kept in confidence except as far as President Wilson was concerned. I am to return it to him to-morrow at nine after taking a copy, which he said I might do if I did it in my own hand. . . .

'Clemenceau expressed his belief, which was also that of Marshal Foch, that Germany was so thoroughly beaten she would accept any terms offered. Haig does not agree with this conclusion. . . .

'I went from the War Office to the Foreign Office to pay my respects to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Pichon. Just before going in I met Venizelos, Greek Prime Minister. We had a few minutes' conversation. He said he was leaving for London Monday and would like to call upon me. We fixed the engagement for to-morrow at 10.30. I remained with Pichon not more than five minutes. I expressed a hope that at the Peace Conference we would work together as cordially as at the Interallied Conference last year, in which event I thought matters could be greatly expedited.

'*October* 27, 1918: . . . Venizelos followed. He explained the claims of Greece on certain parts of Syria. He expressed an intention of visiting the United States in order to see the President and explain these matters to him. He was surprised to learn that for more than a year all such questions had been under my direction and there was a large organiza-

tion now in New York working them out. I advised him not to undertake to see the President. . . . The President was now concerned with war measures. If an armistice came, then he would be ready to take up such matters as Venizelos had in mind.

'General Bliss came before Venizelos left. We discussed the question of an armistice at much length. Bliss thinks it would be better to ask for general disarmament without specifying terms.'

Despite the difference in feeling as to the degree of severity that should characterize the terms to be granted Germany, House found almost complete agreement that the German request for an armistice should not be refused. Among the political leaders it was generally taken for granted that terms would be given to Germany. Two days after his arrival, House cabled to the President: 'Things are moving so fast that the question of a place for the Peace Conference is on us.' This resulted from Clemenceau's assumption that the Germans would accept any terms. What Poincaré's opinion was, House did not learn. A fortnight previous, Foch and Pichon had discussed possible terms with the President of the Republic, who did not hesitate to express himself forcibly to Clemenceau to the effect that the time for an armistice had not arrived. The Premier replied sharply that the decision must be made by the responsible Ministers, and he intimated that any interference by Poincaré would lead to his own resignation. Poincaré apparently withdrew his protests, for the resignation of Clemenceau would have been disastrous. Whether the President of the Republic changed his mind as to the inadvisability of granting an armistice, is not clear.[1]

[1] Gabriel Terrail, *Les négociations secrètes et les quatre armistices*, 221–22. Terrail, who writes under the pseudonym Mermeix, is well informed and accurate. It is obvious that he has had access to the *procès-verbaux* of the armistice conversations, many of which he quotes *verbatim*.

To Colonel E. M. House,
in remembrance of our
collaboration in drafting
the Covenant of the League
of Nations

E. K. Venizelos

Paris, April 11th, 1919

ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS

Of the military leaders, Sir Douglas Haig and General Bliss agreed with both Foch and Pétain that the German demand for an armistice must be accepted, although they differed as to terms. Field Marshal Haig not merely desired it, but was willing to offer conditions that would best facilitate the withdrawal of the German armies intact. General Bliss insisted upon stringent conditions, but recognized the futility and crime of continuing the fighting for a single hour after the Germans were made powerless to resume the war. 'We should have to go back to the days of Rome or earlier,' he said subsequently, 'to find a civilized nation refusing even to discuss terms upon which fighting might cease. It would be unheard of to say: "No, we haven't killed enough of you, there are some towns we want to burn."' [1]

The single important exception among the military leaders was General Pershing. At the meeting of Foch with the national commanders at Senlis on October 25, he apparently concurred with the others as to the nature of the conditions laid down. It was therefore with some surprise that five days later, on October 30, Colonel House received from him a letter protesting against granting any armistice, although he stated that if his opinion were overruled he approved the conditions of Marshal Foch. His letter was accompanied by a lengthy memorandum which was cabled to Washington, in which he set forth his reasons for believing that fighting should continue. The memorandum emphasized the favorable military situation of the Allies and the danger that German armies might, if permitted an armistice, be enabled to withdraw from a critical situation to one in which they could resume hostilities.

General Pershing's belated protest against any armistice produced no effect. Colonel House laid it before Clemenceau and Lloyd George, but they apparently preferred to trust

[1] To C. S., June 22, 1928.

Foch's assurance that all the material benefits of victory would be conferred by his terms as completely as by a victorious but costly invasion. Foch called attention to the inconsistencies between the memorandum and letter, both written on the same day: the first insisting that an armistice would jeopardize victory and imperil the peace, the second approving the Foch conditions as a complete guarantee of ability to impose on Germany a peace satisfactory to the Allied Governments.

President Wilson in Washington was no more affected by the Pershing memorandum than the Allied leaders in Paris. He was entirely averse from any interference that might lead to a continuation of the war against their decision, especially when it was enforced by the judgment of Foch. 'Apart from purely military considerations,' wrote Paul Mantoux, 'there was in the minds of the statesmen a strong feeling that the populations, after showing themselves ready to accept every sacrifice for a just cause, would never forgive their leaders if they thought the fighting had been prolonged beyond the limits of necessity.' [1]

'The human mind,' said John Buchan, 'loves a dramatic *finale*, and asks for the ostensible signs of victory. But to such an argument there are two replies. The Germans were indeed beaten, but the Allies were not far from the limits of their strength, and before a further advance could be made would have been compelled to halt and re-form, and so give the enemy a breathing-space. In a month or two they would have achieved their purpose, but it would have been at the cost of further losses. The encircling movement at Metz, fixed by Foch for the 14th, would certainly have succeeded, but the fruit of it could not have been immediately reaped by the main armies, for, except for Haig's two divisions of cavalry, they were not in a position for swift pursuit. The

[1] Mantoux to House, July 6, 1920.

railway systems of France and Belgium had been strained to their uttermost; the enemy had destroyed most of the communications in the evacuated districts; in the British area railhead was nowhere less than thirty-five miles behind the front, and the distance had to be bridged by motor transport over damaged roads; while behind the French lines the situation was worse. The Allies were not in a position for a rapid and sustained advance. That is one justification for the grant of an armistice. The second is that the request could not decently have been refused, when it gave to the Allies all that they desired — all, indeed, that Germany could give. No honest man could for the sake of a more dramatic close condemn many thousands more to death and suffering. The armistice had all the substance of an unconditional surrender, except that it was negotiated before the hands of the fighting men were formally held up in the field.' [1]

III

The first of the formal sessions of the Allied Council was held on October 31. By this time it had already been decided in quite informal conferences to reply to Germany's request for an armistice with a statement of terms. The more difficult task was to formulate conditions which would at the same time prove acceptable to the Germans and yet deprive them of the power to resume the conflict later on. This task was left to the army and navy chiefs, who drafted the essential terms to be included in the armistice and presented them to the political leaders, first in informal conversations, finally at the formal meetings at Versailles.

Technically the Allied Council which assumed responsibility for the armistice was still the Supreme War Council,

[1] John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, IV, 416. General Bliss does not accept the contention that the terms of the armistice were sufficient to render Germany helpless. But his protest is directed against the *form* and not the *fact* of the armistice. See *American Journal of International Law*, 16, pp. 509 ff.

enlarged on the political side by the representatives of Japan and the smaller Powers that were called in to its sessions. It met in the large room on the main floor of the Trianon Palace Hotel in Versailles, with its windows overlooking the gardens. Down the length of the room extended a wide mahogany table, across which the delegates conversed; in the center sat Clemenceau and directly opposite him, Colonel House, next to the Italian Prime Minister, Orlando. Color was added by the uniforms of the generals and admirals, but the prevailing tone was somber and business-like, just as the predominant note of the discussions was that of a board of directors in a joint-stock company.

The Allied Council did not, as a matter of fact, draft the terms of the armistices. When it met, drafts were already prepared. 'Its sole function,' writes General Bliss, 'was to trim the edges and round off the corners, in doing which there was an opportunity to consider points raised by the smaller Powers that had not been represented in the preparation of the drafts.' [1] The actual decisions were taken not in the formal meetings at Versailles but in the more informal conversations between the Prime Ministers and House, beginning on October 29. The formation of this steering committee resulted almost inevitably from the circumstances of the moment, which demanded speed and an absence of red-tape. In the full Council, enlarged as it was by delegates from the smaller Powers, there was danger also that time might be lost in speech-making. 'As soon as you get more than ten men in a room,' House protested, 'every one wants to make a speech.' He had the warm sympathy of Clemenceau, whose ability to make a good speech was equalled or excelled by his insistence upon rapid results. The experience of the Paris conferences of November of the previous year emphasized the value of such informal conversations.

The meetings of the Prime Ministers and House, which

[1] *The American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 509.

generally included also Balfour, Pichon, and Sonnino, the Foreign Secretaries, and almost invariably Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the British War Cabinet, were sometimes held in Pichon's study at the Quai d'Orsay, where they gathered in a semicircle around the great flat-topped desk in front of the fireplace. Sometimes they met in Clemenceau's room at the War Office; more frequently in the salon of Colonel House's headquarters, at 78 rue de l'Université. By gathering in a private house the political leaders were able to emphasize the informal character of the conversations, and to invite or exclude whom they chose, without hurting the feelings of any.

The meetings of this steering committee were generally held in the morning, and in these they discussed the topics to be formally approved by the Supreme War Council in the afternoon. Almost invariably the decisions reached by the small committee proved to be final. Clemenceau was a realist. On one occasion after the formal afternoon meeting, Lord Milner protested to Clemenceau: 'You drew up resolutions at your morning meeting which have not been adopted here at the meeting of the Supreme War Council.' But the Prime Minister replied very definitely: 'That is not necessary. The Supreme War Council met this morning and passed upon those questions. Whenever the Prime Ministers and Colonel House meet, the Supreme War Council meets, and what we do is final.'

In this committee is to be found the prototype of the Council of Four of the Peace Conference, and in the speed of its decisions there was good argument for the creation of the Council of Four in the following spring. There was this difference. In spite of Clemenceau's dictum, the decisions of the small steering committee were later discussed and confirmed in the afternoon meetings, and sometimes amendments were made, whereas the Peace Conference was not permitted to know what the Four meditated and had no opportunity to alter their decisions.

The first problem which must be faced was that of the relations between the great and the smaller Powers of the Allies. At the informal conversation in Pichon's study, on October 29, the French Foreign Secretary stated that Belgium, like the other Powers, had received from Wilson the correspondence with the Germans; what ought she to do? Ought she not to have a representative present in the discussions, especially when it came to the evacuation of Belgium? Japan, also, had suggested that she be consulted.

'Would not other Powers have to be admitted, when we discuss Austria?' asked Balfour.

'Yes,' said Lloyd George, 'Serbia and Greece will certainly be in the same category as Belgium.'

'If you admit Belgium,' said Sonnino, 'you cannot possibly exclude the others.'

Lloyd George then suggested the principle which was ultimately to prevail. Preliminary conferences should take place between the four Powers then debating (France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States). There should be no meeting at Versailles until the general lines of agreement had been concerted. At the more formal conferences at Versailles, Japan should be represented. He himself saw no reason why all the minor nations should not be represented when questions which affected them were being discussed. They need not be present for the whole discussion.

Sonnino thought that if all the smaller nations were invited to take part in the armistice discussions, there would never be any agreement. The Council would be too unwieldy. He proposed that the minor nations should be asked merely to present their views.

Pichon proposed that only those states which had been invaded should be invited. This, however, as Balfour pointed out, would include Montenegro and exclude Great Britain.

'Why not include,' said Lloyd George, 'simply those states

who had made heavy sacrifices for the cause of the Allies?'

'Would that include Portugal and Brazil?' was the natural rejoinder.

The question was difficult to answer, and it was finally decided that Belgium and Japan, who had asked to be consulted, should send representatives. Other nations, which had made great sacrifices or suffered severely for the cause of the Allies, such as Greece and Serbia, should be represented if they demanded it. Lloyd George's suggestion that the smaller nations should be represented only when their particular interests were in question, was significant, since it was the basis of the arrangement finally adopted at the Peace Conference.

IV

The Supreme War Council and its steering committee worked under tremendous pressure, for they had multiple functions. Not merely must they decide the military terms of the armistice with Germany and the larger question as to whether they would accept the Fourteen Points; they had also a vast amount of executive business. They must conduct the war to its conclusion, and the war was a political and economic as well as a military affair. They were not dealing with a single enemy, for the Austrians had not yet surrendered at the time when House arrived in France; indeed, strange to say, for several days after his arrival the Allied leaders were not certain that they would surrender. If Austria held out, the terms to Germany might be of a different character than if she yielded. If Austria agreed to yield and Germany held out, there must be drafted a military plan of campaign directed against Germany from the south. When the collapse of Austria-Hungary completed the revolutionary movements, there arose the problem of the disposal of the Austrian fleet, which had been handed over to the Jugo-Slavs. There was also the problem of the Turkish armistice.

At the outset of the conversations the question arose as to how the Allies should deal with the various demands for an armistice, from Germany, Austria, and Turkey. It was discussed in Pichon's study at the Quai d'Orsay, on October 29.

Clemenceau pointed out that the only communication before them was from President Wilson, who had transmitted the Austro-German demand. It was now for them to reply to the President stating their terms. Many people, he said, had suggested that the whole matter should be referred to Foch. The Marshal, however, was only a judge of purely military questions on the front where he was Commander-in-Chief, and many other questions were involved, such as naval and political matters. 'If Foch decides, then the Governments are suppressed. I propose that we consult Marshal Foch and all others whose advice may be essential. Then we will transmit our conclusions to President Wilson.'

The British expressed some surprise at the suggestion of treating through the President instead of directly with the Germans. Lloyd George pointed out that if the terms were transmitted through the President, there could be no give and take. The enemy would have to accept or refuse outright. Yet there might be included in the conditions some clauses which would especially offend German susceptibilities, and they would not be able to propose any alternative, even though it might be acceptable to the Allies, because of public opinion. If the terms were published and the Allied Governments did not insist upon their integral acceptance, public opinion would be aroused to a pitch of frenzy, and yet the point of difference might be of no importance.

Colonel House then suggested the course ultimately followed, that the terms should be communicated to Wilson for his endorsement, and that he should inform the Germans that their request for an armistice would be granted. The terms in detail, however, would be given directly to Ger-

many by the Allies; they ought not to be published at this stage.

Lloyd George agreed, but Clemenceau objected to inviting the Germans to an armistice. 'I find the arguments of Mr. Lloyd George excellent,' he said, 'and I cannot refute them. But there is one objection to his proposition: it is impossible. If we follow it out, it will be necessary for Marshal Foch to send a parliamentary to go to the German lines with a white flag to ask for an armistice. Marshal Foch would never do this and I would never permit him to do it.'

'No,' said Lloyd George, 'we would merely ask President Wilson to ask the Germans to send a parliamentary with a white flag to approach Marshal Foch. We would communicate with the President, and if he approves he would notify the Germans to send across a man with a white flag.'

This was entirely acceptable to Clemenceau, and it was thus decided. Sonnino, representing Italy in the absence of Orlando who had not yet arrived in Paris, was troubled by the possibility that Germany might accept and Austria refuse! Negotiations for an armistice with both Austria and Germany should take place at the same time and in the same manner. 'Supposing,' he said, 'we were to make an armistice with one of those nations and not with the other, then the peoples which had made peace would say they could not continue fighting with their ally still left at war for this or that object. Suppose we had an armistice and peace with Germany, the rest of the Allies would say that they could not continue the war, and would leave Italy and Austria to fight it out by themselves.'

To this Colonel House replied that two days previous Austria had agreed to make a separate peace, regardless of Germany, and to accept Wilson's conditions whatever they might be. She was certainly in a state of exhaustion.

'Yes,' said Sonnino, 'but if Germany accepts first, what will happen? The very next day she will send Germans

dressed as Austrians, as she did before she was at war with Italy, to fight against the Italian army. Moreover, Austrian divisions would be withdrawn from the Western Front and used against the Italians. If France and Great Britain have made peace with Germany, public opinion in those countries will not stand troops being sent to the Italian Front.'

The Italian Foreign Minister, however, was reassured by Clemenceau and Lloyd George, who promised that President Wilson would instruct the Austrians to send an officer to ask General Diaz for terms at the same time that the Germans sent a parliamentary to Foch. The conference then adopted the following resolution to determine its procedure:

'That the associated Governments should consider the terms of an armistice with Germany and the terms of an armistice with Austria. They should then forward these to President Wilson. If President Wilson agreed in the terms he should not notify them to the German or Austrian Governments, but should advise these Governments that their next step was to send parlementaires to Marshal Foch and General Diaz respectively.'

The Austrians, however, were too sorely in need of an immediate cessation of hostilities to await the development of this process. At the conference of October 30, Orlando arrived from Italy with the news that as he passed through Turin, General Diaz had telephoned him that an Austrian officer had crossed the line with a letter from an Austrian general, not the Commander-in-Chief, asking for terms immediately. Diaz had replied that if a properly accredited envoy brought the demand, he would treat with him after receiving instructions from his Government. The following wireless had also been received from the Emperor Karl:

The Austrian Emperor to the Italian Supreme Command

If evacuation of Venetia is carried out under the pressure

of the Italian Army, that is, in the course of continuous fighting and battles, destruction and severe damage would be inevitable to the villages, bridges and railways. If, on the other hand, hostilities were to be suspended, the evacuation of the well-cultivated plains with rich crops would take place without any damage whatever to the country. For these reasons the Supreme Command desires to bring about an immediate suspension of hostilities.

CHARLES, *Emperor*

The Italians regarded the letter in the nature of blackmail, in order to precipitate a suspension of arms and permit the Austrians to effectuate a safe retreat, after which they might refuse the terms of an armistice. They had therefore refused to listen to the general without proper credentials.

'I would listen to that general,' said Clemenceau.

'I would certainly listen to him,' added Lloyd George. He went on to elaborate a suggestion he had already put before Clemenceau and House, to the effect that it would be a great advantage to settle completely with Austria before dealing with Germany. He urged that the Allied generals prepare at once terms for Austria. 'I propose,' he said, 'that these terms be submitted straightaway to Austria. As soon as Austria is out, Germany will capitulate at once. Therefore we ought to act before President Wilson has time to answer.'

The proposition was at once accepted by House who, interested as he was in the endorsement of the Fourteen Points before signing an armistice, realized that it would be easier to take them up in connection with the German armistice than the Austrian, and appreciated keenly the value of securing the surrender of Austria before terms were presented to Germany. The military advisers proceeded at once to draft the military terms while the conference took up the naval terms for Austria, which provided for the surrender of all the submarines completed since 1910, six battleships, four cruis-

ers, and nine destroyers. 'We have left the breeches of the Emperor,' remarked Clemenceau, 'and nothing else.' The terms were completed after further consultation with the military and naval experts and presented to the first meeting of the Supreme War Council on the afternoon of the following day. They were approved, with slight changes, and sent to General Diaz the same day.[1]

Thus it came about that the procedure of negotiation with Austria was quite different from that followed in the case of Germany. In the latter case, the notification to the enemy that he might ask for terms of an armistice was sent through President Wilson, and the notification was accompanied by a formal acceptance of the Fourteen Points, with two reservations. In the case of Austria, the Hapsburg Commander did not wait for any notification through Wilson, but sent his white flag at once to Diaz, who communicated the armistice terms, which were accepted on November 3. Nothing was said of the Fourteen Points nor of any reservation to them. Did the Fourteen Points, upon which as a basis Austria had originally sued for an armistice, apply to Austria? It was a problem which later was to vex the Peace Conference.

V

With the Bulgars and the Turks out of the war, and the terms of the Armistice delivered to Austria, Allied leaders were able to concentrate upon the negotiations with Germany. The discussions very early developed agreement upon two points. The military and naval terms must be of the sort defined by Wilson in his replies to Germany; that is, they must fully maintain the existing military superiority of the Allies; but they must, if possible, be framed so that Germany would be willing to accept them. There was no certainty that

[1] The essential portions of the *procès-verbal* of the meeting of the Supreme War Council are printed in Terrail, *op. cit.*, 205 ff.

the Germans would not attempt a last-ditch stand, for the leaders in Paris could not appreciate the demoralization into which the German nation had fallen, nor the complete pessimism of the German Government. On November 1, Clemenceau communicated a report which he had received from Switzerland, indicating that internal conditions in Germany made surrender inevitable, and in reply to a question he stated his belief that the Germans would sign any sort of armistice, no matter how severe the terms. Field Marshal Haig, however, insisted that their army was far from disorganized, and Mr. Balfour stated his belief that there was serious danger of their refusing to sign.

Hence it seemed necessary to be prepared for a refusal and for the prosecution of the war. Foch was ready to make his great drive with fresh American and French armies in Lorraine. With the collapse of Austria becoming hourly more apparent, the possibility of an attack upon Germany from the south was considered. The question occupied much of the discussion in the informal conference of November 2, which was held in Clemenceau's room at the War Office, and almost the entire discussion in the conference of November 4 in Colonel House's headquarters.

At the first meeting, which included only Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando, and House, Lloyd George raised the question of methods of attack upon Germany:

'Should the Allies advance,' he asked, 'by Bavaria or Bohemia? . . . What action should be taken if Austria went to pieces and guerilla warfare broke out? In such an event would it not be possible to utilize the forces of the constituent nations of Austria friendly to the Allies?'

These questions were referred to the military chiefs for consideration and, on the morning of November 4, they met with the four political leaders to consider the plan of cam-

paign. Edouard Beneš, representing the Czecho-Slovaks, was also called in. The Generals proposed a concentric attack against Munich by three Allied armies, one advancing from the south (the Inn valley) and two from the east (Salzburg-Linz). They would be under the immediate command of an Italian, but the operations as a whole would be directed by Foch. The plan called also for reënforcements drawn from the Czecho-Slovak divisions in Italy and from the Allied 'army of Salonika.' The concentration of the main force would take at least thirty to thirty-five days.

The discussion which followed these proposals was desultory and not of importance, except that it indicates the seriousness with which Allied leaders considered the possibility of Germany's refusal of armistice terms, a week before the signature of the armistice. Lloyd George urged the occupation of strategic points in Austria, so as to intercept the transport of oil to Germany from Galicia. 'As M. Beneš was present, he asked whether it would not be possible to consider the question of bombarding Berlin by sending squadrons of heavy bombing aeroplanes to Prague?'

Clemenceau interpolated that he was 'delighted with this suggestion.'

Beneš was indefinite. The Czech districts were now entirely independent of German-Austrian control, but the entire Czecho-Slovak nation was in a state of anxiety lest Bohemia be occupied by the German armies. Bohemia was one of the most important metallurgical centers. In it were the Skoda Works. The Czechs had no arms with which to oppose a German invasion. What forces the Germans could send against them he did not know.

'None,' replied Foch.

In any case, Beneš continued, if the Allies would send airplanes, arms, and some troops around whom the Czechs might rally, he agreed that a Czech army could be formed from the soldiers released by the demobilization of the Austrian army.

Lloyd George also laid stress upon the army of Franchet d'Esperey, which he thought might be directed into Bohemia; if it were not used against Germany, it would at any rate protect the coal.

Orlando accepted the plan, in principle, 'with the reservation that he wished to consult his Chief of Staff on the question in deference to his opinion. He also wished to point out that the Italian Army was tired by the initial battle it had just fought and by pursuit of the enemy.'

'Victory,' said Foch, 'is winged and abolishes weariness.'

With this poetical maxim of strategy in their ears, the political chiefs approved the Generals' plan and authorized them to study the following questions:

'The possibility of taking immediate steps to send a force which shall include the Czecho-Slovak forces on the French and Italian fronts to Bohemia and Galicia with the following objects: To organize these countries against invasion by Germany. To prevent the export to Germany of oil, coal, or any other material and to render these available to the Allied Forces. To establish aerodromes for the purpose of bombing Germany.

'The immediate coöperation of General Franchet d'Esperey in these objects.'

The crushing of Germany was inevitable.[1] Deprived of her allies, fighting desperately as her armies retreated from France, she was thus to be threatened on the flank, and the forces of her former ally, Austria, were to be used against her. Her enemies were in a position to set terms for an armistice that amounted to capitulation, and such was in fact the character of the terms which Foch laid before the Supreme War Council.

[1] In the opinion of General Bliss, 'the conditions of the armistice with Austria, which showed Germany that such a plan of operations was on the cards, would have obliged the latter power to accept any conditions that might have been proposed in the armistice with it.' *American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 510.

CHAPTER V

GERMANY SURRENDERS

Autocracy is dead. . . .
Colonel House to President Wilson, November 11, 1918

I

THE military terms of the German armistice were drafted by Marshal Foch, after consultation with his colleagues, and they were approved with no material change by the political chiefs of the Allied and Associated Powers. The legend that pictures the United States as pleading for softer terms has no historical foundation. President Wilson sent Colonel House to the Supreme War Council with a free hand, entirely without instructions; and House from first to last made it clear that in all military matters the United States Government was inclined to accept the recommendations of Foch.

The only indication of Wilson's desires was contained in a cable which the President sent to House on October 29 and which was entirely in line with his public statements. The official paraphrase of the cipher cable is as follows:

My deliberate judgment is that our whole weight should be thrown for an armistice which will not permit a renewal of hostilities by Germany, but which will be as moderate and reasonable as possible within that condition, because lately I am certain that too much severity on the part of the Allies will make a genuine peace settlement exceedingly difficult if not impossible. . . . Foresight is better than immediate advantage.[1]

Colonel House found no disagreement with this attitude on

[1] Wilson to House, October 29, 1918.

the part of Clemenceau and Lloyd George; on November 1, he cabled to Wilson that they both 'realize that the terms should not be harsher than is necessary to fulfill your conditions regarding the making of it impossible for Germany to renew hostilities.' At the same time Wilson insisted that expert military judgment ought to determine the terms technically necessary to render Germany helpless, and he accepted it as final. During the course of the first discussion of the Allied political chiefs regarding the German armistice, House said to Clemenceau and Lloyd George: 'The President is willing to leave the terms of the armistice to Marshal Foch, General Pershing, Field Marshal Haig, General Diaz, and General Pétain.'

Ever since the first interchange of notes between Germany and President Wilson, the political and military leaders of the Allies had been discussing armistice terms. As early as October 6 the Prime Ministers, then meeting in Paris, agreed upon principles for the basis of an armistice and requested the military advisers to elaborate them in some detail. General Bliss had been given no instructions and thus could not approve the draft of the military advisers; he cabled it to Washington so that the American Government was fully informed of the general military opinions of the Allies.

On October 23 came Wilson's note turning the matter of an armistice over to the Council in Versailles.[1] It might have been expected that a formal committee of military and naval advisers would have been constituted to draft terms. So far as the military clauses were concerned, the matter was left in

[1] '. . . that if those [Allied] Governments are disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view.'

the hands of Marshal Foch, who contented himself by calling upon the national commanders individually for their views. On October 25 he called General Pétain, Field Marshal Haig, General Diaz, and General Pershing to Senlis, where each expressed his opinion.

The chief difference of opinion arose between the French and the British; the former insisted on much more rigorous conditions than the latter. General Pétain demanded the disarmament of the German troops except for carrying arms and, in addition, the occupation of a broad strip of German territory to serve as a pledge of compliance with Allied peace conditions. In his opinion two things were essential: 'the first is that the German army should return to Germany without a cannon or a tank, and with only its carrying arms. To attain this, he makes practical suggestions. The specification of a time for withdrawal so short that it will be materially impossible for the enemy to carry away his war material. In addition to the evacuation by the Germans of all invaded territory and of Alsace-Lorraine, the occupation by the Allied armies not only of the left bank of the Rhine but of a zone fifty kilometers wide on the right bank; at the same time the delivery of 5000 locomotives and 100,000 cars should be demanded. General Pétain adds, however, that, although these conditions are indispensable in his opinion, it is hardly expected that the Germans will accept them.' [1]

British opinion was much more moderate. At the conference of October 25, Field Marshal Haig laid down conditions which seemed insufficient to both French and Americans. 'In his view the armistice should be concluded and concluded on very moderate terms. The victorious Allied armies are extenuated. The units need to be reorganized. Germany is not broken in the military sense. During the last weeks her armies have withdrawn fighting very bravely and in excellent order. Therefore, if it is really desired to conclude

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 61.

an armistice — and this in his view is very desirable — it is necessary to grant Germany conditions which she can accept. That is to say, the evacuation of the invaded territory in France and Belgium as well as Alsace-Lorraine, and the restitution of the rolling stock taken at the beginning of the war from the French and Belgians. If more is demanded, there is a risk of prolonging the war, which has already cost so much, and of exasperating German national feeling, with very doubtful results. For the evacuation of all invaded territories and of Alsace-Lorraine is sufficient to seal the victory.' [1]

These opinions were couched in general terms. Pershing declared himself on the whole in accord with Pétain. Marshal Foch did not express his own views at the conference of October 25, but on the following day he sent to Clemenceau a letter, in which he drafted the terms he advised.[2] Haig's conditions he regarded as insufficient, for the German armies after evacuating the invaded regions would still be in a position to renew a defensive warfare within their own territories, and the existing military advantages of the Allies would have been thrown away. On the other hand, it was not necessary to disarm the enemy completely, nor did he deem it essential to accept Pétain's principle of depriving the Germans of everything except carrying arms. All that was necessary was to take enough to prevent them from fighting effectively, and leave them enough to preserve order and save their feelings. The armament for the surrender of which he asked amounted approximately to one third of the German artillery and half of their machine-guns. He agreed with Pershing that it was necessary to occupy bridgeheads on the Rhine, and insisted upon the establishment of a neutral zone to the east of it.

While the British regarded the terms of Marshal Foch as

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 61.

[2] See appendix to this chapter for the text of the letter.

unnecessarily severe, General Bliss believed that they would not fulfill the conditions laid down by President Wilson; i.e., that Germany must not be able to resume the war during the course of the peace discussions. Foch's terms provided for the concentration of German armies within their own boundaries and, according to Bliss, left them with sufficient armament to threaten a renewal of hostilities. General Bliss crystallized his own, more severe, terms in a simple formula which amounted to unconditional surrender: complete disarmament and demobilization. Such terms, he believed, would not merely render the Germans helpless, but would guarantee the peace of mind of the Allies and render unnecessary the constant renewal of precautions which were later to arouse irritation in Germany.[1]

General Bliss had already been requested by the War Department to cable his views to Washington. When the Prime Ministers received Foch's terms, they asked House to secure Bliss's plan.

'On the morning of October 27,' General Bliss writes, 'Mr. House showed me Foch's document; said that the conference which was at that moment in session in the dining-room of his house on the rue de l'Université was discussing it, but that they wanted the views of others and among them mine. Accordingly I submitted my attached memorandum. . . . I drew it up in the light of my previously cabled views to Washington and also of Marshal Foch's proposed terms. With Marshal Foch I had already discussed at length his proposition. In substance I had said to him, "The case, as I see it, is this. President Wilson has made it a condition (and all agreed with him) that it must be made impossible for Germany to suddenly resume the war while peace is being discussed. On the side of the Allies, the armistice will be

[1] See appendix to this chapter for General Bliss's terms and his comments thereon.

followed by demobilization of a very large part of their forces. On the side of the Germans, your terms require them to concentrate all their armies from all fronts within their 1914 frontiers. So far as concentrated numbers are concerned the Allies will be weakened and the Germans strengthened. Suppose that while peace terms are being discussed, some of them very humiliating to German pride and already foreshadowed to them in your armistice terms, the right man with the right war cry should appeal to them to be wiped out fighting rather than by the terms of peace. What guarantee have you that Germany cannot rearm this concentrated army of hers with the arms that you are going to permit her to carry back, plus those that they may still have in store, together with the great quantities that she has captured from you and the British, Russians, Italians, etc.?" His reply was that they knew every piece of equipment that Germany could lay her hands on, and that it was absolutely impossible for her to reëquip herself.

'Purely as an *obiter dictum* I may say that no sooner was the Armistice signed than the Allies became obsessed with a fear that Germany could rearm herself to such an extent, at least, as would make her very formidable, and for months this fear haunted the Peace Conference. It wasn't the partial disarmament of Germany that protected the Allies from this danger so much as it was the complete internal disruption of Germany following the signing of the armistice.' [1]

The opinions of the British military leaders as to General Bliss's plan were communicated to House in a short note of October 28.

[1] General Bliss to C. S., June 14, 1928.

General Bliss to Colonel House

PARIS, *October* 28, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have had a long conference to-day with Lord Milner, General Sir Henry Wilson, and General Spears, Chief of the British Mission in Paris. General Spears fully agrees with the views expressed in the memorandum I handed you; Lord M. is disposed to object to demobilization (thinking that Germany may have to be the bulwark against Russian Bolshevism) and Wilson agrees with him. The latter believes in disarmament as to field artillery and machine-guns, but would let the Germans withdraw with the honors of war, i.e., drums beating, colors flying and infantry armament.

Sincerely

TASKER H. BLISS [1]

[1] 'This note to Colonel House,' writes General Bliss on June 14, 1928, 'as I now see, gives the impression that I had a formal interview at the same time with Milner, Wilson, and Spears. This is not correct. I saw Spears separately at his own house. Wilson I met by accident. I had no special reason for seeking his views because I already knew them and with many of them I did not agree.

'My memorandum dated October 28 was written in pencil-draught on the evening of the 27th; given to my secretary early on the morning of the 28th and dated by him when he typed it; and the same morning handed by me to Mr. House. Later in the day he told me that the Prime Ministers were disposed to agree with Marshal Foch who insisted that the Germans would not accept complete disarmament.

'I had been invited to a formal luncheon at the British Embassy. Knowing that Lord Milner was staying there, I took my memorandum with me hoping to have a chance to talk with him about it. After the luncheon, he took me out on the balcony outside the dining-room windows and overlooking the Embassy garden. Sitting there he read the paper very carefully. He said that as to the general idea he entirely agreed with me. He had no doubt that the Germans would accept complete disarmament. He then talked at length about Russia. He would not agree with me that, while there might be much danger of a moral penetration of Bolshevistic ideas, there was no present danger of Russian action by force of arms.

'While we were talking, Wilson, who wanted to see Milner about a different matter and was told by Lord Derby that he would find him on the balcony, opened the Venetian shutter of the window and stuck out his head, but seeing me talking with Milner, turned away. Milner called to

II

On October 29 Colonel House met the Prime Ministers, except Orlando who had not yet arrived, and the Foreign Ministers, to discuss the general terms of the German armistice. There was no indication that the political leaders were inclined to consider seriously the protest of General Bliss that Marshal Foch's conditions would not fulfill President Wilson's stipulation that the German armies must be rendered helpless to renew the fighting. All of them, including Colonel House, were ready to accept Foch's guarantee that his terms were sufficient to prevent a resumption of arms by Germany. It thus resulted that the military terms considered by the Prime Ministers and finally approved were the French terms. These terms, as recommended by Foch as well as those brought in by the Allied Naval Council, they regarded as severe.

'Do you think,' asked Balfour of Clemenceau, 'that there is the smallest prospect of the Germans accepting these terms?'

'They won't the first day,' replied Clemenceau, 'but they will somehow or other contrive not to let the conversations drop.' He suggested, however, that the naval terms were 'rather stiff.'

Lloyd George then read the terms suggested by the Naval Council, which called for the surrender of one hundred and fifty submarines, ten battleships, and six battle cruisers, besides lighter craft.

him, "Come out here, Wilson; I want you to read this paper that Bliss has brought to me." Wilson read it and said in substance what I put in the note to Mr. House. He concluded by saying, "to get them out of France I would build a golden bridge for them across the Rhine."

'As to the idea of not demobilizing the Germans on account of Bolshevism, I couldn't get from either of them anything definite as to the force they would allow the Germans to retain nor the amount and character of their equipment. It looked to me as though they would leave the Germans practically fully armed and mobilized, with no assurance whatever that they might not combine later against the Allies or whatever of the latter might be left.'

'What are the Allies going to do,' asked Colonel House, 'with the ships they take from Germany?'

'They will divide them,' replied the British Prime Minister. 'You can sink them if you like; you must take them away from Germany.'

'Well,' said Balfour, 'I do not think Germany will agree to these conditions. They are stiffer than those imposed on France in 1871; you will have to beat them in the field worse than they are beaten now.'

'We are all agreed,' wrote House in his diary that evening, 'that the articles drawn up by the navy are entirely too severe and we propose to soften them. We plan to eliminate the German battle cruisers and submarine fleet which will be all that is necessary.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *October* 30, 1918

. . . I ascertained that George and Clemenceau believed that the terms of the armistice, both naval and military, were too severe and that they should be modified. George stated that he thought it might be unwise to insist on the occupation of the east bank of the Rhine.[1] Clemenceau stated that he could not maintain himself in the Chamber of Deputies unless this was made a part of the armistice to be submitted to the Germans, and that the French army would also insist on this as their due after the long occupation of French soil by the Germans; but he gave us his word of honor that France would withdraw after the peace conditions had been fulfilled. I am inclined to sympathize with the position taken by Clemenceau.

I pointed out the danger of bringing about a state of Bolshevism in Germany if the terms of the armistice were made

[1] To this occupation Wilson also had objected.

too stiff, and the consequent danger to England, France, and Italy. Clemenceau refused to recognize that there was any danger of Bolshevism in France. George admitted it was possible to create such a state of affairs in England, and both agreed that anything might happen in Italy. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

On November 1, the heads of government and House met with Foch, Weygand, and Sir Eric Geddes representing the Naval Council, at House's headquarters, in preparation for the formal meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles in the afternoon. . . . They first took up the recommendations of Foch. Despite the fact that the latter had agreed to omit a bridgehead at Strassburg as originally planned, Lloyd George stated that the terms seemed 'rather stiff' to him. 'All the great cities of western Germany will be in Allied hands. The Conference must realize that we are making a very stiff demand. I ask Marshal Foch if it would not be possible to secure the bridgeheads required for military purposes without occupying the great cities.'

'Mainz,' said Foch, 'is absolutely indispensable. Frankfort will not be occupied, although I admit that it will be within two miles of the occupied territory and under the guns of the Allies. I must insist also that Cologne is of tremendous importance, as it is the junction of many railways and the focus of the land communications of the Palatinate; therefore I regard Cologne as an indispensable bridgehead.'

Evidently what chiefly troubled the British was the occupation of German territory by Allied armies. They feared lest by asking more than was absolutely essential the chance of an armistice might be lost and unnecessary difficulties raised in relations with Germany. Foch was at pains to show that without occupation, Allied military supremacy could not be maintained. The course of the discussion is worded as follows:

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'Marshal Foch said that Field Marshal Haig had taken the view that it was only necessary for the Allies to occupy Belgium, Luxemburg, and Alsace-Lorraine, and not to advance to the left bank of the Rhine. He had replied that he could never agree to this. If Field Marshal Haig's proposals were adopted, the enemy would be in a better defensive situation than they were in now, since they would be able to retire to the right bank of the Rhine and prepare a strong line of defense there. Consequently, he could never accept this proposal.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that Field Marshal Haig had argued somewhat as follows: Why do you wish to take more than the territories he had proposed? If you had these you would have in hand everything you desired in the West at the Peace Conference, and if the Armistice broke down it would not be necessary for you to attack, but for the enemy to do so.

'Marshal Foch said that the principle on which he had based his terms for an armistice was that you must not place the enemy in a better position than he now occupied to resume the contest in the event of a breakdown of the armistice. Field Marshal Haig's proposals violated this principle, since they put the enemy in a better position. If Germany should break off the peace negotiations, the Allies ought to be in a position to destroy her. The whole of the German system of defense, however, is based on the Rhine, and we cannot settle down during an armistice unless our perspective embraces the bridgeheads on the Rhine.

'Colonel House said that he was not disposed to take from Germany more than was absolutely necessary, but he was disposed to leave the matter in Marshal Foch's hands.

'Marshal Foch said that if we had to begin fighting again, in his view it was indispensable to hold the bridgeheads. If peace followed the armistice, then we should have the territory we wanted in hand, even under Field Marshal Haig's

conditions. But, he asked, what gages and guarantees should we have to secure the indemnities we required?

'Mr. Lloyd George said that before a final decision was taken he wished to put the whole of Field Marshal Haig's case before his colleagues. Field Marshal Haig had attended two meetings of the War Cabinet, and had put his case. Marshal Foch had summed it up very fairly, but, nevertheless, he would like to put it more fully. Field Marshal Haig took the view that the German army was by no means broken. Wherever you hit them they hit back hard and inflicted heavy casualties. They were being gradually pushed back, but were not in any sense a defeated army like the Austrians. They showed none of the ordinary symptoms of a disorganized army. Their retirement was effected in perfect order and was conducted with the greatest skill. Field Marshal Haig had told him that, although earlier in the fighting we had made great captures of guns, we were now only picking up a few here and there, most of which had been damaged by our own artillery, and were not worth taking away. Sir Douglas Haig considered that they would retreat from their present line of 400 kilometers to one of 245 kilometers, and that nothing the Allies could do would prevent it. On this shorter line they would save seventy divisions and would be able to hold on. He would like his colleagues to consider this view carefully before taking a final decision. There were, therefore, three views before the Conference: General Pershing's view, which was that we should demand almost unlimited terms of an armistice;[1] Marshal Foch's view, which he had expounded; Field Marshal Haig's view, which was the most moderate of all.

'M. Orlando suggested that a middle course might be adopted, namely, that the Germans should evacuate terri-

[1] This statement is not in accord with Pershing's letter of October 30 to House expressing general approval of the Foch terms. It might be applied more accurately to General Bliss's terms.

tory and retire to the east bank of the Rhine, leaving a neutral belt on the west bank.

'Marshal Foch said that when the three Commanders-in-Chief had discussed the question, General Pershing and General Pétain had agreed with him, and Field Marshal Haig alone had had a different point of view. He quite agreed with all Field Marshal Haig said about the German army not being disorganized or beaten. But this did not give us the right to place the German army in a better position for defense than it now occupied.

'Colonel House asked if this could be prevented? Was it certain that the German army could not resist on its own borders?

'Marshal Foch said that the German frontier, prior to 1870, was only a conventional line devoid of military importance. If we were to stop still on that frontier and have a neutral zone on the west bank of the Rhine, as M. Orlando had suggested, the enemy would be able to entrench himself strongly on the right bank of the Rhine, and, in order to attack him, we should have to cross the Rhine.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that Field Marshal Haig did not assert that we should not be much better off if we could get the bridgeheads. The question he did raise, however, was as to whether the German army was in such a condition that the German Government would concede these drastic terms. Field Marshal Haig pointed out that the British and French armies were very tired, and that their man-power situation next year would be very difficult. The American army, of course, had unlimited man-power, but it was inexperienced and would only be buying its experience next year. The material was splendid, but time was required to train the staffs. The French had had a fully trained army at the beginning of the war, but it had taken us two or three years to reach the same pitch of excellence. Hence Field Marshal Haig, while admitting that bridgeheads were desirable, considered that

if we were not in a position to secure them, we ought to demand less drastic terms.

'M. Clemenceau, after summing up Field Marshal Haig's case as set forth by Mr. Lloyd George, said that while the *moral* of the Allied armies was excellent at present, nevertheless, if an armistice was made it would be difficult to get the armies to fight again. If, however, it leaked out to the soldiers that the terms advised by Marshal Foch had been rejected, it would be still harder to make them fight. On the other hand, if we had secured bridgeheads on the Rhine the armies might well have the confidence to advance again. It would never do, however, to raise doubts in the minds of the soldiers.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that the real point was as to whether we were in a position to enforce Marshal Foch's terms?

'Marshal Foch said that if he was asked whether the German army was now on its way (*en train*) to accept, his answer would be "No." Without the bridgeheads we could never be master of Germany. It was essential first to be master of the Rhine. . . .

'Mr. Lloyd George asked if, in Marshal Foch's view, it was possible for Germany to take up a new and strong position somewhere this side of the Rhine? Or, to put the question in another way, could Marshal Foch continue to drive the Germans back all through the winter?

'Marshal Foch said that the German army could undoubtedly take up a new position, and that we could not prevent it. But he did not want to facilitate them in this task, as would be done by Field Marshal Haig's terms. If these were adopted, the Germans would have an opportunity to re-form and prepare a new entrenchment. His answer to the question as to whether he could continue driving the Germans back during the winter was in the affirmative. He could do so, and ought to do so, until we

were in a more favorable position than we should be if we accepted Field Marshal Haig's conditions.

'Mr. Lloyd George asked if Marshal Foch was of opinion that the collapse on the eastern and southern borders of Austria would affect the question?

'Marshal Foch said that undoubtedly this would make a difference. The collapse of Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey would enable the Allies to concentrate all the forces released against the Germans.

'M. Clemenceau said that the situation of the Allies *vis-à-vis* the enemy had never been so crushing before. The American effectives were enormous. To-morrow the Allies would be able to march across Austria against Germany. He had little doubt that the first reply of the German Government would be to refuse our terms, but as we increased our advantages they would concede them.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that, after hearing the whole discussion, he was prepared to stand by Marshal Foch's document. He felt, however, that if, as the result of our demands, Germany should make up her mind to continue fighting, it was most important to let it be known to our soldiers that we had fully examined the contrary point of view put forward by Field Marshal Haig. It might leak out that Field Marshal Haig had not agreed in Marshal Foch's terms. Consequently, he would like it to be known that this view had been most carefully considered, and that a contrary decision had only been taken after all the generals had been consulted and on the unanimous decision of the Supreme War Council.'

The approval of the Prime Ministers for the Foch terms thus secured, the articles of the Armistice which embodied them were brought before the formal meeting of the Supreme War Council during the afternoon session of November 1. They were adopted with but little discussion. It was agreed

that consideration of the articles referring to the evacuation of Russia and Rumania should be postponed until a later meeting.

Upon one point Clemenceau was insistent; namely, that there should be a clause in the Armistice demanding reparation for damages. To this Lloyd George objected that he was willing to insert a clause covering restitution of stolen property, but that reparation was rather a condition of peace. House added, and Sonnino agreed, that the subject was so large that it would threaten to hold up the Armistice indefinitely.

On the afternoon of November 2, Clemenceau returned to his demand for a reference to reparations in the Armistice. 'It would not be understood in France,' he said, 'if we omitted such a clause. All I am asking is simply the addition of three words, "reparation for damages," without other commentary.'

'Can that be made a condition of the Armistice?' asked Hymans, representing Belgium.

'It is rather a condition of peace,' said Sonnino.

'It is useless,' said Bonar Law, 'to insert in the Armistice a clause which cannot be immediately carried out.'

'I wish only to make mention of the principle,' returned Clemenceau. 'You must not forget that the French people are among those who have suffered most; they would not understand our failure to allude to this matter.'

'If you are going to deal with the question of reparation for damages on land, you must also mention the question of reparation for ships sunk,' said Lloyd George.

'That is all covered in my formula of three words,' said Clemenceau, "reparation for damages," and I beg the Council to comprehend the feeling of the French people.'

'Yes, and of the Belgian,' interjected Hymans. 'And the Serbs,' said Vesnitch. 'Italians also,' added Sonnino.

Once more Bonar Law objected that reparations was not

properly a topic to be introduced into the Armistice clauses; that special mention was made of it as an underlying condition of peace in the note which was to be sent to President Wilson and that it was useless to repeat it.

But the insistence of Clemenceau carried the Council. At the close of the session an addition was made to the clause, which had momentous consequences. 'It would be prudent,' said Klotz, French Minister for Finance, 'to put at the head of the financial section a clause reserving future claims of the Allies and I propose the following text: "With the reservation that any future claims or demands on the part of the Allies remain unaffected."' The clause was accepted, and upon this apparently innocent sentence was later based the French claim that, as regards reparations, they were not bound by the terms of the pre-Armistice agreement, but were authorized to insert in the conditions of peace any terms that seemed to them justified by circumstances.

Colonel House made no further objection to the French demand for the insertion of the topic of reparations in the Armistice. In fact it was he who at the close of the discussion, appreciating the insistence of Clemenceau, proposed the adoption of the French Prime Minister's formula. His feeling was that, although out of place in the Armistice, it was harmless and, as Clemenceau indicated, a sop to French sentiment. The basis for the peace, House argued, was to be found not in the Armistice clauses, which merely put an end to the war, but rather in the pre-Armistice correspondence between the Allies, President Wilson, and Germany, in which the principles of the settlement were carefully defined. But the references to reparations in the Armistice Convention were destined to return to plague the American delegates at the Peace Conference.

III

If the military conditions drafted by Foch produced long

debate by the heads of government, the naval conditions drafted by the representatives of the Allied navies resulted in even more protracted discussion. They were taken up in the small conference which met in Colonel House's headquarters on the morning of November 1. 'Geddes presented the naval programme,' wrote House, 'which the Interallied Naval Council offered for our consideration. We thought it too drastic.'

'The list of ships to be surrendered,' said Geddes, 'has been drawn up on the basis that if the [British] Grand Fleet and the [German] High Sea Fleet were to fight a battle, the German fleet would come out of it with the loss of the equivalent of these ships. A second reason is that if President Wilson's conditions are to be fulfilled and the Germans are not to be in a position to renew the war under better conditions than those at present existing, their fleet must be cut down as proposed. A final reason is that the German fleet is superior in battle cruisers to the Allies, and if these were not handed over, the Allies would have to start to build battle cruisers.'

Each branch of the service is naturally insistent upon its own importance, and to the military advisers it seemed that the naval experts asked more than was really necessary to disable Germany, in demanding the surrender of battleships and battle cruisers as well as submarines. Foch appreciated the threat of the submarines, but he could not recognize the need of surrendering the surface fleet which had been shut up in German harbors during the war. He was anxious that German acquiescence in the military terms he had drafted should not be endangered by the drastic demands of the navy.

'As for the German surface fleet,' Foch asked, 'what do you fear from it? During the whole war only a few of its units have ventured from their ports. The surrender of

these units will be merely a manifestation, which will please the public but nothing more. Why make the armistice harder, for I repeat its sole object is to place Germany *hors de combat*? What will you do if the Germans, after having accepted the severe and ample conditions that I propose, refuse to subscribe to the additional humiliations you suggest? Will you on that account run the risk of a renewal of hostilities with the useless sacrifices of thousands of lives?' [1]

'It is necessary,' added Foch, according to House's record of the conversation, 'to deprive the enemy of the means by which he can hurt us. Up to now the submarines have undoubtedly hurt us most, and are still hurting us. These therefore should be taken without question. From an outside point of view, however, I do not understand why we should demand the battle cruisers, and I myself am opposed to it. It would not be right to ask the armies to fight again in order to secure these conditions.'

Geddes retorted that it was an error to suppose that the surface fleet of Germany had not been and might not yet be a factor of tremendous importance:

'Marshal Foch is wrong in saying that the submarines alone have hurt us. But for the Grand Fleet the ships it is now proposed to take would have been out on the trade routes and inflicting great destruction on the Allies. They would even interrupt the arrival of American troops. Marshal Foch has no idea how much trouble the High Sea Fleet has given us, because the Grand Fleet has always held it in check. If these ships are not surrendered, the Grand Fleet during the armistice will be in the same state of tension as that of two armies opposed to each other in battle array in trenches.'

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 67.

Foch then proposed to shut the High Sea Fleet up in certain designated ports. The German ships might be confined to the Baltic, while the Allies took Heligoland and Cuxhaven as a gage. To this Geddes replied that it would be then necessary to watch the Belts closely and all the strain of war would be continued for the navy.

Lloyd George intervened to suggest a compromise based upon the surrender of submarines and battle cruisers, leaving the battleships to be interned. Like Foch, he was anxious that Germany's acceptance of the Armistice should not be endangered by asking anything that was not absolutely necessary.

'The terms proposed by the Allied Naval Council,' Lloyd George said, 'are rather excessive. I suggest that the Allied Naval Council should meet again and reëxamine the question on the basis that all the submarines are to be surrendered. I fear it is unavoidable to obtain the battle cruisers. The Germans have a large number of battle cruisers now, and several more upon the stocks. Consequently, in 1919, they will have as many as all the Allies put together, and will even get ahead in the North Sea. We cannot alter this balance against us before 1921. I suggest therefore that the second basis should be the surrender of the battle cruisers. These vessels are possessed of great speed and nothing that the Allies have afloat can catch them. The British have fortunately built some battle cruisers, but neither the American nor the French navies have any at all. I am inclined, however, to agree with Marshal Foch about the battleships. In this respect we have an overwhelming superiority. I propose that the battleships might be interned in neutral ports with nucleus crews on board. These conditions will appear much less hard to the Germans who, while they will know that they will never get the battle cruisers back, will assume that the battleships will be returned to them.'

Thus the question was referred back to the Naval Council, which much against the desires of its members was forced to consider how the naval terms might be made more palatable to Germany. At the meeting of the Supreme War Council on the afternoon of November 2, Clemenceau asked Admiral Hope, representing the Naval Council, to explain the situation.

Hope presented the matter much as Geddes had done to the Prime Ministers. Unless Germany were deprived of the ships demanded by the Naval Council, she would come out of the war stronger than at the beginning and would remain a permanent menace to the peace of the world. The British Admiralty insisted that the German fleet must be rendered innocuous for the period of the Armistice. Either the ships designated must be surrendered or must be interned under Allied surveillance in a neutral port, on the understanding that they should not be returned to Germany. Surrender he regarded as the preferable plan.

Much against House's wish, Lloyd George insisted upon further postponement. He still opposed the drastic conditions of the Naval Council, but he wished to avoid an open disagreement with his own naval advisers.

'I attended the Supreme War Council,' wrote House, 'at Versailles at three o'clock. . . . Lloyd George insisted upon postponing the naval part of the programme until Monday. He contended that if Austria accepted our armistice, we could then put stiffer terms to Germany. I contended that we might as well send in our terms now and not wait until [we know] what Austria will do. We have given Austria an ultimatum which expires Sunday at midnight. Germany will know whether Austria accepts our terms before she receives the terms of the armistice being sent her, and if Austria declines the conditions we have laid down, then Germany will certainly decline the conditions laid down for

her. It seems to me a useless waste of time to defer action.'

On November 3 the Prime Ministers met again with their naval and military experts to discuss naval terms. Mr. Lloyd George cast about to find a compromise acceptable to naval experts who insisted upon the surrender of the battle cruisers and battleships. 'Our admirals,' he said, 'have their tails up and will not move. We might suggest that instead of confiscating cruisers and battleships we intern the whole lot.'

'That is what I think,' said House, 'and leave the ultimate disposition of these ships to the Peace Conference.'

'There will be no place in the Society of Nations,' added Clemenceau, 'for a country with thirty-two dreadnoughts,' evidently feeling that surrender of the ships would mean their addition to existing European navies.

The compromise advocated by Mr. Lloyd George was supported by Admiral Benson, in whom Colonel House placed great confidence. 'I was in favor of sinking all German war craft,' wrote Admiral Benson later. 'The majority of the Committee on naval terms wanted the vessels divided up. I did not feel that after peace any naval armaments should be increased.' [1] Unable to secure acquiescence in his plan for immediately sinking the German navy, Admiral Benson was able at least to assure himself that the Allied navies would not ultimately be increased by the addition of the German ships, and that the term 'surrender' was used merely to show Germany she need not expect the return of her navy.

Admiral Benson to Colonel House

PARIS, *November* 2, 1918

I have had a full and frank discussion with Sir Eric Geddes on the question of the ships [to be] surrendered. He assured

[1] Admiral Benson to C. S., June 16, 1928.

me with the utmost frankness and candor that the disposition of these ships should not be used for augmenting European armament after the war and that in his opinion none of the European Powers have so anticipated. He stated frankly that in his opinion they should be destroyed when final decision is reached. I believe that he is fully informed of the attitude of the other Associated Powers.

The word 'surrendered' was used in order that there might be no possible misinterpretation by Germany as to the terms imposed.

W. S. BENSON

Admiral Benson believed that if the German ships were never to be returned to the Germans, and if the omission of the word 'surrender' would ease German sensibilities, it might be possible to intern them as Mr. Lloyd George suggested. On November 4 he presented to the chiefs of state and Colonel House the advantages of the compromise proposed.

'It is held that it is impossible,' Benson told the heads of government, 'to decrease the number of vessels to be surrendered. As a matter of fact all of the German fleet will, by the requirements, be rendered harmless under either condition imposed.

'The point at issue is, shall the ten battleships be surrendered or shall they be interned in a neutral port?

'In any case the final disposal of all vessels must be decided by the Peace Conference.

'To intern the ten battleships will increase the probability of acceptance of the terms of the Armistice. In order to save life every possible effort should be made to submit such terms as will satisfy our requirements and at the same time bring an end to hostilities.

'The British, French, and Italian proposals consider the

surrender to the Allies and to the United States of sixteen dreadnoughts [six battle cruisers, ten battleships], eight light cruisers including two minelayers, and fifty destroyers. These proposals are in complete agreement with my own, except in respect to the sixteen dreadnoughts which I wish to have interned and not surrendered to the Allies. I think that the internment of all the dreadnoughts might be required rather than the surrender of sixteen.'

Again Marshal Foch protested against the recommendation of the naval experts, even though softened by Benson's suggestion. 'Shall the war be continued for the sole advantage of interning these ships in a neutral port? I myself cannot see the advantage of this, especially as the ships have never been used.'

'Yes,' said Lloyd George, 'but if these German battleships had not existed, Great Britain could have furnished 350,000 more men, possibly 500,000, and we should have had ample supplies of coal, oil, and other commodities.'

'But the German battleships,' retorted Foch, 'never left their ports and naval warfare now is conducted by submarines. German battleships have no doubt kept the British fleet in home waters, but their action was virtual not actual. Are we to continue the war simply to suppress this virtual influence? Should the Germans refuse to surrender their fleet, what should we do? If we obtain satisfaction for our military conditions the war is ended whether the enemy accepts the naval clauses or not. Otherwise we should continue the war to pursue the capture of ships which are blockaded in their ports, when the acceptance of the military conditions alone is enough to carry the day.'

There were thus three plans before the heads of government: that of Foch, who protested the uselessness and danger of even interning the German battleships; that of the

Naval Council, which demanded their surrender; that of Mr. Lloyd George supported by Admiral Benson, advocating their internment. After listening to Marshal Foch, Mr. Lloyd George proposed that Germany should surrender the stipulated number of submarines, but that all the other war craft in question, battle cruisers as well as battleships, should merely be interned in a neutral port. Clemenceau, Orlando, and House agreed that this course should be followed, if the naval advisers could be persuaded to yield.

This solution was laid before the Supreme War Council in the afternoon of November 4, at the final reading of the armistice terms. Lloyd George in the mean time had left for England, and the remaining British representatives made it perfectly plain that the responsibility for softening the naval terms must rest with the Prime Minister. Geddes in very pointed fashion asked whether the heads of government and Colonel House had 'decided' that surrender of the German warships in question was impossible and that they should be interned. Colonel House replied that such was his impression and that Mr. Lloyd George, who had made the proposal, had left in the belief that internment had been substituted for surrender.

Clemenceau agreed with House, but stated that the Council was free to change the decision. The draft of the terms revised in the sense suggested by Lloyd George was then read and approved by the Council. Both Geddes and Admiral de Bon for France made it clear that they did not like the change and acquiesced only because of the definite decision of the heads of government. 'I want to state,' said Geddes with emphasis, 'that the Naval Council, withholding its approval, is merely submitting to the decision of the Ministers.' [1]

[1] The essential discussions taking place in this and preceding meetings of the Supreme War Council are published in Gabriel Terrail, *Les négociations secrètes et les quatre armistices*, 226–66.

The naval terms of the armistice, as agreed upon, included the following reading for the clause which had given so much difficulty:

'The following German surface warships, which shall be designated by the Allies and the United States of America, shall forthwith be disarmed and thereafter interned in neutral ports to be designated by the Allies and the United States of America and placed under surveillance of the Allies and the United States of America, only caretakers being left on board, namely: six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers including two minelayers, fifty destroyers of the most modern types.'

The difficulty of finding an adequate neutral port for the internment of the German fleet led to the insertion of a phrase permitting internment in Allied ports.[1] It thus came about that ultimately the German fleet found itself at Scapa Flow. When, in the following spring, the caretakers on board the warships opened the cocks and sank the fleet, much unmerited criticism was laid at the door of the United States, since it was believed that it had been the insistence of President Wilson which had led to merely the internment of the fleet and not to its surrender. The record shows, however, that in this matter the Americans did no more than accept the proposal of the British Prime Minister. Had Lloyd George stood with his naval experts, House would have supported him.

'*November* 4, 1918: Sir Eric Geddes,' wrote House, 'asked to call just before dinner and he was with me for more than a half-hour. He came to bid me good-bye. . . . I frankly told him that I preferred the resolution offered by George which we adopted, but that I would [in any case] have followed

[1] The phrase ran as follows: 'or failing them, Allied ports.'

England in the naval terms as I had followed Marshal Foch in the military terms.'

IV

With the final decision upon the naval clauses settled, the Supreme War Council approved the Armistice terms as a whole, and the comments of the Allied Governments upon the correspondence between Wilson and the Germans were given to Colonel House. On the evening of November 4 he telegraphed them to Washington with the covering telegram that follows:

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 4, 1918

In order that there may be no misunderstanding, I venture to repeat the procedure agreed upon for the handling of the armistice negotiations with Germany. The terms of the armistice to be offered Germany, and the memorandum of the observations of the Allied Governments on the correspondence which has passed between the President and the German Government both having been communicated by me to the President and having been accepted by him, the President is expected to proceed as follows:

1. To notify the German Government to send a parlementaire to Marshal Foch, who has been advised of the views of the Allied and United States Governments respecting the terms of the armistice to be offered Germany;

2. To forward to Germany together with the communication mentioned in 1, *supra*, the memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on the correspondence which has passed between the President and the German Government.

It must be clearly understood that the terms of the armistice to be offered Germany are not to be made public until these terms have been accepted by Germany.

EDWARD HOUSE

This procedure was followed exactly by President Wilson, who on November 5 informed the Germans that Foch awaited any representatives they might send to ask for an armistice. The German delegates left Berlin on the afternoon of November 6 and arrived within the French lines on the evening of the 7th. On Friday, the 8th, they were taken to a train in the forest of Compiègne, in which Foch, representing the Allied armies, and Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, representing the Allied navies, received them. The following report of the conversation which ensued was sent to Colonel House the next morning by M. Clemenceau:

Report of Conversation with the German Delegates

'They take places at the table.

'Marshal Foch asks the German delegates the purpose of their visit.

'M. Erzberger replies that the delegation has come to receive the propositions of the Allied Powers so as to arrive at an armistice on land, on sea, and in the air, on all the fronts and in the colonies.

'Marshal Foch replies that he has no proposition to make.

'Count Oberdorff asks how they should express themselves. He himself is not apt at phrases. He may say that the delegation asks the conditions of the armistice.

'Marshal Foch replies that he has no conditions to offer.

'M. Erzberger reads the text of the last note of President Wilson saying that Marshal Foch is authorized to make known the conditions of the armistice.

'Marshal Foch replies that he is authorized to make known those conditions if the German delegates ask for the armistice. "Do you ask for the armistice? If you ask for it, I can make known the conditions under which it may be obtained."

'M. Erzberger and Count Oberdorff declare that they ask for the armistice.

'Marshal Foch then declares that he will have the conditions read. As the text is rather long, the principal paragraphs will first be read by themselves. The entire text will then be handed to the delegates.

'General Weygand reads the principal clauses of the armistice conditions.

'General de Winterfeldt declares that he is entrusted with a special mission by the High Command and the German Government. He reads the following declaration:

'"'The armistice conditions which we have just listened to demand careful examination. In view of our intention to reach a settlement the examination will be made as rapidly as possible; all the same, it will require a certain amount of time, so much the more since it will be necessary to consult with our Government and the High Command.

'"'During this time the struggle between our armies will continue and will demand necessarily numerous victims among the troops and the people, who will have fallen uselessly at the last minute and who might be saved for their families.

'"'In these circumstances the German Government and the High Military Command have the honor to revive the propositions they made day before yesterday by radio telegram; to wit, that Marshal Foch might agree to fix immediately and for the entire front a provisional suspension of hostilities, to begin to-day at a certain hour and the details of which might be arranged as soon as possible."

'Marshal Foch replies: "I am General-in-Chief of the Allied armies and representative of the Allied Governments. The Governments have drawn up their conditions. Hostilities cannot cease before the signing of the armistice. I too am indeed anxious to reach a conclusion and I will help you so far as possible. But hostilities cannot cease before the signing of the armistice."'

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, *November* 9, 1918

If the Germans refuse the armistice we shall publish nothing. But I regard it as almost certain that they will accept. If they communicate the clauses of the armistice to foreign newspapers, we will permit our papers to copy them, reserving for the Chamber the news of the signing when it takes place.

I have just seen Foch who has given me a *procès-verbal* [of the interview with the German delegates] which I shall send you as soon as it is typewritten. They made no observation with regard to either the bridgeheads or the fleet. Their line is to say that they will be overwhelmed by Bolshevism if we do not help them resist it, and that afterward we shall be invaded by the same plague. They asked that they be permitted to retire more slowly from the left bank of the Rhine, saying that they must have the means to combat Bolshevism and to reëstablish order. Foch replied that they could form their army on the right bank. They also objected that we were taking too many machine-guns and that they would have none left with which to fire on their compatriots. Foch replied that they had their rifles. They also asked what we were going to do with the left bank of the Rhine. Foch answered that he didn't know and that it was not his business. Finally they asked to be fed by us, saying that they would die of hunger. Foch replied that they should put their merchant marine in our pool and thus could be fed. They replied they would prefer to receive *laissez-passer* for their own boats. They complained that we were taking much too many locomotives, considering that theirs were scattered everywhere. Foch replied that we were only asking for what they had taken from us. They are much depressed. From time to time a sob escaped the throat of Winterfeldt. In these circumstances I do not think there is any doubt about their signing, but the present situation in Germany puts us

in the presence of the unknown. It is to the interest of our armies to have a few days for military operations. We must consider the future, for the signing of an armistice by a Government which could not make itself obeyed would merely increase the confusion. It seems that we already face such problems, for it was impossible to find military authorities who could make themselves obeyed in the German lines and this fact held up for a long time the courier who was bearing the clauses of the armistice to the German Headquarters. So long as he does not find before him any one with authority to settle the business definitely, Foch will continue his advance.

CLEMENCEAU

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 9, 1918

German delegation after first preliminary conference passed through French lines and attempted to pass German lines so as to return to Spa. German artillery continued heavy bombardment, destroying roads and bridges, and so made it impossible for German delegation to pass through their own lines. It is expected that German delegation will not be able to reach Spa until to-night. We will probably not receive any definite news until Sunday night or Monday morning.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 10, 1918

As soon as armistice is signed I will advise you in a message which will have priority over all others. Will inform you whether terms as heretofore cabled you are same as those

finally signed. If there are minor changes will send these in the same cable. Will advise you the time when the terms of the armistice will be made public in Europe, and you can make terms public in United States in advance thereof, provided United States censor does not permit any mention of publication or of terms to leave United States before publication here.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 10, 1918

Have just been advised from Foch's headquarters that Germans have handed Foch a memorandum showing the location and specifications of delayed mines planted by Germans in territory now occupied by Allies with purpose of exploding same during next few months. Some of mines are timed not to explode until January. One of these mines exploded to-day in territory formerly occupied by Germans and now occupied by British. Furnishing of this memorandum strong evidence to indicate armistice will be signed promptly. Officers at Foch's headquarters have been instructed to stand by in anticipation of Armistice being signed this afternoon.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 10, 1918

The following has just been received by me from Colonel Mott: 'The German Government has announced by wireless that they accept the terms of the Armistice. The signing of the Armistice as far as we know has not taken place. No information has yet come from Marshal Foch that any paper has been signed.'

HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 10, 1918

Would suggest when the Armistice is signed that you read the terms to Congress and use the occasion to give another message to the world. You have a right to assume that the two great features of the Armistice are the defeat of German military imperialism and the acceptance by the Allied Powers of the kind of peace the world has longed for. A steadying note seems to me necessary at this time. A word of warning and a word of hope should be said. The world is in a ferment and Civilization itself is wavering in the balance.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*November* 11, 1918: Many documents came in late last night,' wrote House in his diary, 'and it was necessary for me to remain up until midnight to keep in touch with Clemenceau and the negotiations going on between the German plenipotentiaries and Marshal Foch. We decided ourselves certain modifications in the armistice that the Germans demanded, such as the revictualling of certain sections. . . .

'We expected every moment to receive word that the Armistice had been signed, but actual word did not reach us until 5.30 this morning, fifteen minutes after the actual signing had taken place. Major Willard Straight telephoned Gordon within a few minutes after the signing and Gordon came and waked me to give the glad tidings. Clemenceau sent one of his generals around to give me exact information. I received him of course in my bedroom and *en déshabille*, and did not tell him that I had already gotten the news.'

Colonel House to President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 11, 1918

Autocracy is dead. Long live democracy and its immortal leader. In this great hour my heart goes out to you in pride, admiration and love.

EDWARD HOUSE

APPENDIX

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ALLIED ARMIES
1st Section
3rd Bureau

G.Q.G.A. *October* 26, 1918

MARSHAL FOCH
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ALLIED ARMIES,
to: THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL,
MINISTER OF WAR

After having consulted the Commanders-in-Chief of the American, British, and French Armies,[1] I have the honor to inform you of the military conditions on which an armistice could be granted capable 'of protecting, in a complete manner, the interests of the peoples concerned, and of assuring to the associated governments the unlimited power of safe guarding and of imposing the details of peace to which the German Government has consented.'

I. Immediate evacuation of the countries invaded contrary to right: Belgium, France, Alsace-Lorraine, Luxemburg.

Immediate repatriation of their inhabitants.

The abandonment of a part of the enemy material in the evacuated region.

This evacuation must be made under conditions of time to make it impossible to the enemy to remove a large part of the material of war and supplies of every nature that are stored there, that is to say, in accordance with the following time-table:

At the end of 4 days the German troops must be withdrawn behind the line marked I. on the map attached:

At the end of 4 more days behind the line marked II.

At the end of 6 more days behind the line marked III.

Belgium, Luxemburg, Alsace-Lorraine will, in this way be liberated in a total period of 14 days.

This period will count from the day of the signing of the Armistice.

In all cases the total material abandoned by the enemy must amount to:

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[1] The Chief of the Staff of the Belgian Army, summoned at the same time as the Commander-in-Chief, has not yet been able to arrive at my Headquarters on account of distance. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

5,000 guns [a] — ½ heavy, ½ field:
30,000 machine-guns: [b]
3,000 minenwerfer [a]

To be handed over *in situ*, under detailed conditions to be laid down.

The Allied troops will follow up through these countries the evacuation which will be effected in accordance with detailed regulations to be issued subsequently.

II. Evacuation, by the hostile army, of the country on the left bank of the Rhine.

The country on the left bank of the Rhine will be administered by the local authorities under the control of the Allied troops of occupation.

The Allied troops will assure the occupation of those countries by garrisons holding the principal crossings of the Rhine (Mainz, Coblenz, Cologne, Strassburg), with bridgeheads at these points of 30 kilometre radius on the right bank — holding also the strategic points of the region.

A neutral zone will be reserved on the right bank of the Rhine between the river and a line traced parallel to the river and 40 kilometres to the east of the Swiss frontier and the Dutch frontier.

The evacuation by the enemy of the Rhine country will be carried out under the following time-limits:

To the Rhine, 8 days after the time-limit indicated above (22 days in all to date from the signing of the Armistice);

To behind the neutral zone: 3 more days (25 days in all to date from the signing of the Armistice).

III. In all the territories evacuated by the enemy no destruction of any kind will be committed, nor will any damage or injury be done to the persons or property of the inhabitants.

IV. The enemy will have to surrender, under conditions to be laid down, 5,000 [1] locomotives and 150,000 wagons in good condition.

V. The German Command will be required to indicate the position of land mines and slow fuses left in the evacuated territory, and to facilitate their location and their destruction under penalty of reprisals.

VI. The carrying out by the enemy of these conditions will take altogether a period of 25 days. In order to guarantee the carrying out of these conditions the blockade will be completely maintained during the whole of this period. It will only be after this period is completed, and when the conditions are fulfilled, that the supply of the enemy can be authorised in accordance with the special agreements which will regulate it.

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[a] That is to say, about one third of the amount of artillery of the German Army. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

[b] That is to say, about half the machine-guns of the German Army. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

[1] Of these quantities 2500 locomotives and 135,000 wagons represent the material removed from Belgium and France, the surplus is necessary for the train service in the country on the left bank of the Rhine. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

VII. Allied prisoners will be given up in the shortest possible period under conditions, the detail of which will be laid down later.

From the naval point of view the following conditions appear necessary and sufficient as bases:

The enemy will surrender, under conditions to be laid down, 150 submarines, representing about the number which are at present in a condition to go to sea.

All the German surface fleet will withdraw to the ports of the Baltic — the port of Cuxhaven and the Island of Heligoland will be occupied by the Allied Fleets.

The enemy will indicate the positions of all his mine-fields and obstructions of every kind, with the exception of those moored in his territorial waters. The Allies will have the right of minesweeping wherever they consider necessary.

FOCH

Bliss Memorandum on Armistice Terms

October 28, 1918

'Under ordinary circumstances the end of a war is indicated by two phases, viz.:

'a) An armistice, or a cessation of hostilities between the contending armies; and,

'b) A conference of the Powers concerned to determine and enforce the terms of peace. The extent to which the beaten party has effective participation in this conference depends ordinarily upon the extent to which he is beaten.

'But at the end of a great world-war like the present one, in which it may be assumed that one party is completely beaten and which will be followed by radical changes in world-conditions, the concluding phases are:

'a) A complete surrender of the beaten party, under such conditions as will guarantee against any possible resumption of hostilities by it;

'b) A conference to determine and enforce the conditions of peace with the beaten party; and

'c) A conference (perhaps the same one as above) to determine and enforce such changes in world-conditions — incidental to the war but not necessarily forming part of the terms of peace — as are agreed upon as vital for the orderly progress of civilization and the continued peace of the world.

'Such I conceive to be the three phases that will mark the close of this war and which, if properly developed, will follow the war with an epoch-making peace.

'These phases should be kept separate and distinct. The conditions accompanying one should not and need not be confused with those of another.

'It is for the military men to recommend the military conditions under which hostilities may cease so that the political governments may begin to talk, without fear of interruption by a resumption of hostilities.

'What is the object to be kept in mind, in imposing military conditions to guarantee against resumption of hostilities?

'It is to ensure the ability of the Powers associated in the war against the enemy to secure all of their just war-aims, for which they have prosecuted the war.

'It is conceivable that the enemy will accept one set of conditions that will ensure the attainment of these war-aims, but will reject another set of conditions intended to ensure the same thing. In that case insistence on the latter will mean continued war with the attainment of the same aims at the end of it as might be obtained now, with the probability that the enemy may be less able then to meet some of the just demands.

'If it is considered possible that the enemy will accept certain so-called military conditions that have been proposed for his surrender, it is quite certain that he will accept others. In that case, the real question is "Will these two sets of conditions equally accomplish the essential object, to wit, cessation of hostilities without power on the part of the enemy to resume them?

'Apparently, all are agreed that there must be a complete military surrender on the part of the enemy as a preliminary to anything else. How shall this surrender be effected and made evident?

'It has been proposed, as one way to accomplish this, that there should be a partial disarmament by the enemy, accompanied by imposition of certain conditions which apparently foreshadow (and will be regarded by the enemy as foreshadowing) certain of the peace terms. This partial disarmament, apparently, leaves the enemy with the organization of his army intact, with his infantry armament intact, with an unknown amount of his artillery and half of his machine-guns, and with apparently reserves of ammunition intact. If, during the subsequent period, this army can receive its missing armament, either from reserve stores of which there is no absolutely certain information, or from any other source, it is ready to receive it and then might again become a formidable object to deal with. If the enemy accepts such conditions, and is acting in perfectly good faith, it is even more certain that it will accept complete disarmament and demobilization without the imposition of conditions which, coming at the very first moment, may be very doubtful in their effect. If, on the other hand, the enemy accepts these conditions and is not acting in good faith, it will be because he thinks that these conditions are more favorable to his possible subsequent resumption of hostilities. If we secure partial disarmament accompanied by the other conditions proposed, and it does not prevent subsequent resumption of hostilities, then we will have failed in our purpose. If we secure complete disarmament and demobilization of the active land and naval forces no other guaranty against resumption of hostilities is needed and the powers concerned will be guaranteed the attainment of all their just war-aims. If the enemy refuses complete disarmament and demobilization, it will be an evidence of his intent not to act in good faith.

'I, therefore, propose the following:

'First, that the associated powers demand complete military disarmament and demobilization of the active land and naval forces of the enemy,

leaving only such interior guards as the associated powers agree upon as necessary for the preservation of order in the home territory of the enemy. This, of course, means the evacuation of all invaded territory, and its evacuation by disarmed and not by armed or partly armed men. The army thus disarmed cannot fight, and demobilized cannot be reassembled for the purposes of this war.

'Second, that the associated powers notify the enemy that there will be no relaxation in their war-aims but that these will be subject to full and reasonable discussion between the nations associated in the war; and that even though the enemy himself may be heard on some of these matters he must submit to whatever the associated powers finally agree upon as being proper to demand for the present and for the future peace of the world.'

Comment of General Bliss on Armistice Terms

June 14, 1928

The basic ideas of my memorandum are these:

1. The Armistice terms with Germany were supposed to make it absolutely impossible for Germany to resume the war while peace was being discussed. Of course, these terms would involve, during their operation, a military supervision of Germany.

2. If that were accomplished, no other armistice terms were necessary. The Peace Conference could meet in peace and prepare terms of peace with an assurance that they would be accepted.

3. If Germany believed that her case *in the field* was hopeless (and on no other supposition would she have asked for an armistice) she would be as likely to accept my terms as those of Marshal Foch. She knew that the purpose of the Allies was to make her helpless for a resumption of the war. If she were willing to be made helpless she could not object to complete surrender. If she rejected this but would accept a much less complete disarmament, it was a fair presumption that she had in the back of her head the idea that some time she might want to resume the war and that the terms that she had accepted did not render her helpless for so doing.

Since the war various people have expressed approval of my recommendation, solely because they thought that it would have been more humiliating to the Germans and they thought they ought to have been more humiliated. No idea was more remote from my mind than that. The recommendation was made only because I believed that it was the only way to meet Mr. Wilson's declaration that the Armistice terms must make Germany unable to resume the status of war.

CHAPTER VI

TRIUMPH OF THE FOURTEEN POINTS

We are quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas and its application.

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House, November 3, 1918

I

GERMANY'S acceptance of the Armistice on November 11 deprived her of further capacity for carrying on the war, and she was as helpless to resist future demands of the Allies as if she had yielded without any conditions whatever. But it is important to note that the surrender was not unconditional in either the moral or legal sense. As a result of the correspondence carried on by the Berlin Government, President Wilson, and the Allies, Germany had secured certain rights.

Her initial request for an armistice was based upon the stipulation that the peace to follow would be in accordance with Wilson's Fourteen Points and the principles laid down in his subsequent speeches. The President accepted this basis as a condition precedent to the Armistice, and it was also finally accepted by the Allies, with a reservation touching one of the principles and an explanation regarding another. This understanding as to the conditions of the future peace came to be called the pre-Armistice Agreement, and it was appealed to then and later, as the basis for the peace, by both Germany and the Allies. No matter how helpless Germany might be physically as a result of the military terms of the Armistice, she had acquired, through the pre-Armistice Agreement, the right to a peace settlement based upon the Fourteen Points.

Allied acceptance of President Wilson's peace terms was

not secured without great difficulty.[1] The heads of the European states naturally looked upon him as far removed from, and incapable of appreciating, European problems. His principles were couched in vague terms which might be interpreted so as to provide for neither stability nor justice in the peace settlement. What was 'justice,' and why should it be defined by the president of a trans-Atlantic state rather than by those who had experienced what they regarded as the wanton aggression of the Central Powers, and who after protracted effort and sacrifice had finally defeated those Powers on the field of battle? Long before the entrance of the United States into the war, the Allies had crystallized their war aims in certain treaties among themselves. Whether or not those treaties were wise and just might be a matter of opinion, but it was hard to convince the Allies that they should be scrapped at the behest of a distant idealist. They were ready to listen sympathetically to American arguments, but were not inclined to surrender their own conviction as to what the details of the peace settlement should be.

On the other hand, President Wilson took the attitude that the peace settlement was too vital and touched too many states of the world to be left to the decision of the great Allied Powers by themselves. Great Britain, France, and Italy, by their very proximity to the struggle, were necessarily affected by prejudices and selfish ambitions which would distort their judgment. Furthermore, although they had made no promises to the United States, their declarations on war aims had emphasized the Wilsonian programme: the rights of small peoples, the rule of democracy, equal justice to all. They had implicitly accepted his principles while the issue of the war lay in doubt; to repudiate them, now that Germany lay helpless, would be clearly a manifestation of bad faith.

[1] 'When the Armistice conferences started,' wrote Sir William Wiseman, 'it seemed for a time as if it would be utterly impossible to get the Allies to agree to an armistice based on the Fourteen Points.'

The United States, moreover, had a very direct interest in the peace settlement. She had entered the war at the moment when Allied strength was weakening; she had furnished vital assistance in advancing huge sums of money, quantities of food and of raw materials, and finally, as the result of a desperate appeal by Marshal Foch, nearly two millions of troops. It was at least questionable whether without this assistance the Allies would have been able to win the war. The United States could not afford to leave the peace settlement to Europe, thus risking another war in the future. Who would guarantee that the conditions which had brought the war to Europe and ultimately to the United States would not be allowed to persist?

Such differences of opinion were very clearly in the mind of Colonel House when he came to represent the United States at the Armistice conferences. The prime object of his mission he regarded as winning from the Allies an explicit acceptance of the principles of President Wilson, as expressed in the Fourteen Points and later speeches. He took a very small part in the discussion of the military and naval terms to be imposed on Germany. But he was determined to fight for the endorsement of the Fourteen Points with every weapon that diplomacy put at his disposal. Whatever approval had been given to Wilson's speeches by Allied leaders had been entirely unofficial. Now that Germany seemed to be breaking rapidly, it was vital to win an official agreement. Two days after his arrival in Paris Colonel House wrote in his diary:

'*October* 28, 1918: It seems to me of the utmost importance to have the Allies accept the Fourteen Points and the subsequent terms of the President. If this is done the basis of a peace will already have been made. Germany began negotiations on the basis of these terms, and the Allies have already tentatively accepted them, but as Germany shows

signs of defeat it is becoming every day more apparent that they desire to get from under the obligations these terms will impose upon them in the making of peace. If we do not use care, we shall place ourselves in some such dishonorable position as Germany when she violated her treaty obligations as to Belgium.'

Colonel House's task was rendered yet more difficult by the fact that in the United States itself an influential element in American opinion frankly opposed the Wilsonian programme. 'Let Germany pay for her misdeeds,' was the burden of the refrain. House, as well as Wilson, was perfectly willing that Germany should pay so far as she was able; but he feared lest the spirit of vengeance should destroy the sense of even-handed justice and regard for the future which was necessary to a permanent settlement. Opposition to Wilson's influence on the European situation was frankly expressed a few weeks later by ex-President Roosevelt: 'Our Allies and our enemies,' he said, 'and Mr. Wilson himself should all understand that Mr. Wilson has no authority whatever to speak for the American people at this time. . . . Mr. Wilson and his Fourteen Points and his four supplementary points and his five complementary points and all his utterances every which way have ceased to have any shadow of right to be accepted as expressive of the will of the American people. . . . Let them [the Allies] impose their common will on the nations responsible for the hideous disaster which has almost wrecked mankind.' This was direct encouragement to the Allies, coming from the American who, after Wilson, was best known in Europe, to divide the spoils and pay no attention to the Wilsonian scheme of a new international order.

The fact that House was able, in spite of difficulties, to win from the Allies an explicit approval of Wilson's programme, gave to the Armistice conferences of November

their peculiar and significant character. Not merely did the agreement then reached provide for the cessation of hostilities, but it also laid down the bases for the future settlement. Technically the negotiations leading to the Armistice did not take the form of peace preliminaries; actually they set forth in general principle the conditions with which the ultimate peace must comply.

II

House's first step in preparation for the debate with the Allied leaders was to provide an interpretative commentary upon the Fourteen Points. They had been drafted in general terms in January, 1918, at a time when it would have been difficult to set down definite conditions of peace. Their very vagueness, which may have attracted the enemy, made of them an admirable tool of propaganda but unfitted them for service as a peace programme. Immediately upon his arrival in France, Colonel House undertook a definition of the several points as he understood them, and because of his close association with President Wilson at the time when they were given to the world, he was well qualified for such an important task. The commentary, completed in three days, was immediately telegraphed in full to the President.[1]

[1] Colonel House was fortunate in having the assistance of two of the ablest students of public opinion alive, Walter Lippmann and Frank Cobb. Mr. Lippmann, after his experience as Secretary of the Inquiry, had spent several months in the various belligerent nations and was able to summarize the state of mind in each. Mr. Cobb, probably the most brilliant American editorial writer, a clear-thinking Liberal, devoted to Wilsonian principles, exercised much influence in the Armistice conferences. 'It was Cobb,' wrote Sir William Wiseman, 'who finally drafted the reference to the "Freedom of the Seas" which was accepted by the Armistice negotiators. This was not known at the time, and a few weeks later the New York *World* made a bitter attack on House in connection with the Freedom of the Seas, not knowing that its own editor had drafted the offending passages.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *October* 29, 1918

I have had Cobb direct the interpretation of your Fourteen Points.[1] I am cabling this to you for your correction and revision. It is very essential that I should have this at the earliest moment, for I am constantly asked to interpret them myself and the wires may become crossed.

EDWARD HOUSE

The following day Wilson replied by cable that the comment on the 'Fourteen Points is a satisfactory interpretation of the principles involved,' but that the details of application mentioned should be regarded as merely illustrative suggestions. Obviously all detailed points would have to be considered at the Peace Conference. Wilson's approval made of the commentary the closest approximation to an official American programme ever drafted, and in view of the criticism that Wilson's idealism was nebulous and incapable of translation into a definite policy, it is of great historical importance.[2] Colonel House later wrote (January 31, 1920):

'It has been stated that many of the Fourteen Points were so vague and so general that they were practically meaningless, and the Entente could very well refuse to interpret them in the way they were meant. This is not true, for each point was interpreted before the Armistice was made and the interpretations filled many typewritten pages. They were cabled in advance to the President for his approval; therefore Clemenceau, Orlando, Lloyd George, and the others were barred from pleading they did not understand what each meant. These interpretations were on the table day

[1] Internal evidence indicates that the actual drafting of the commentary was largely the work of Walter Lippmann.

[2] The commentary is printed in the appendix to this chapter.

after day when we sat in conference in Paris while the Armistice was in the making. Many times they asked the meaning of this or that point and I would read from the accepted interpretation.'

This official commentary took up each of the Fourteen Points in order; the more important sections were those that dealt with the general rather than the special territorial conditions. The first point,[1] which was liable to offend the dislike of publicity characteristic of the old-style European diplomacy, was defined as directed against such secret treaties as the Triple Alliance, rather than against privacy of discussion.

'The phrase "openly arrived at" need not cause difficulty. In fact, the President explained to the Senate last winter that the phrase was not meant to exclude confidential diplomatic negotiations involving delicate matters. The intention is that nothing which occurs in the course of such confidential negotiations shall be binding unless it appears in the final covenant made public to the world. . . . It is proposed that in the future every treaty be part of the public law of the world, and that every nation assume a certain obligation in regard to its enforcement. Obviously, nations cannot assume obligations in matters of which they are ignorant, and therefore any secret treaty tends to undermine the solidity of the whole structure of international covenants which it is proposed to erect.'

The interpretation of the second point, involving the Freedom of the Seas,[2] pointed out that it must be read in

[1] Point I: 'Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.'

[2] Point II: 'Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be

connection with the creation of a League of Nations. In time of peace there could be no question of interference with trade; in case of a general war the League would be empowered to close the seas to the trade of the offending nation. In case of a limited war, involving no breach of international covenants, the commentary did not go farther than to insist that the 'rights of neutrals shall be maintained against the belligerents, the rights of both to be clearly and precisely defined in the law of nations.' What House had in mind was not the abolition of the right of blockade, but to do away with the holding-up of neutral trade on the high seas which had caused such tension between the United States and the Allies in 1915 and 1916; his specific purpose was the abolition of contraband and the recognition of the immunity of private property on the high seas.[1]

Point III [2] was interpreted to mean not the establishment of a world-wide system of free-trade, but merely the destruction of special commercial agreements as between members of the League,

'each nation putting the trade of every other nation in the League on the same basis, the most favored nation clause applying automatically to all members of the League of Nations. Thus a nation could legally maintain a tariff or a special railroad rate or a port restriction against the whole world, or against all the signatory powers. It could maintain any kind of restriction which it chose against a nation not in the League. This clause naturally contemplates fair and equitable understanding as to the distribution of raw materials.'

closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.'

[1] See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 57–62, 70–80, 131–34.

[2] Point III: 'The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.'

As regards the fourth point, touching disarmament, the commentary indicated merely the necessity of accepting the principle and providing for the appointment of an international commission of investigation to prepare detailed projects for its execution.

In its treatment of the fifth point, regarding colonial claims, the commentary waved aside the interpretation that a reopening of all colonial questions was involved. 'It applies clearly to those colonial claims which have been created by the war. . . . The stipulation is that in the case of the German colonies the title is to be determined after the conclusion of the war by "impartial adjustment" based on certain principles. These are of two kinds: 1. "Equitable" claims; 2. The interests of the populations concerned.' The commentary made no attempt to decide how far Germany could claim the return of her colonies on those grounds. It is of importance because it suggested the principle of mandatories which later was developed by General Smuts and incorporated in the Covenant of the League. 'It would seem,' the commentary continued, 'as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry, and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon all colonial powers.'

When it came to the more special points the commentary is less authoritative as an expression of American policy, partly because Mr. Wilson made plain that his mind was not fixed as to the details of the peace. In certain respects, however, it defined clearly what became the American point of view at the Peace Conference. This was especially true of the points affecting France and Belgium. It enunciated the principle that 'in the case of Belgium there exists no distinc-

tion between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" destruction. The initial act of invasion was illegitimate and therefore all the consequences of that act are of the same character. Among the consequences may be put the war debt of Belgium. The recognition of this principle would constitute the "healing act" of which the President speaks.' It was implied, therefore, that Germany should be forced to pay to Belgium an indemnity for all war costs.

France, however, according to the interpretation of the eighth point, could not fairly claim repayment for anything more than direct damage done by the invasion of Germany, since the invasion of France was not in itself a violation of international law. Alsace-Lorraine, according to the commentary, was to be restored completely to French sovereignty. Further French territorial claims, to the Saar Valley in particular, were not approved.

As regards the ninth point, Italian frontiers, the commentary recognized the need of a strong frontier to the north and suggested the possibility of accepting the Treaty of London line in the Tyrol, with local autonomy granted to the inhabitants who were of German stock. As to the Adriatic, it expressed the hope that an agreement following the lines of the Pact of Rome could be reached between Italy and the Jugo-Slavs, with Trieste and Fiume made into free ports. The dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy was accepted, and the rights of the successor states approved, with an argument for a programme aiming at some sort of confederation of southeastern Europe. In the Near East, it interpreted President Wilson's purpose as providing international control for Constantinople, Anatolia for the Turks, an independent Armenia. The commentary recognized, without criticism, the dominance of French control in Syria promised by the secret treaties, and stated specifically that Great Britain was 'clearly the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Arabia.' It interpreted Wilson's intention as

meaning that there should be 'a general code of guarantee binding on all mandatories in Asia Minor . . . written into the Treaty of Peace. This should contain provisions for minorities and the open door.'

The commentary emphasized the recognition of an independent Poland, but offered no solution of the insoluble problem as to the means by which Poland could reach the sea without cutting off East Prussia. It suggested, however, that Dantzig be made into a free city and the Vistula internationalized. As to Russia, it interpreted the intention of the President as meaning the recognition of the *de facto* governments in the smaller states which had split off from Russia proper, conditional upon the calling of national assemblies for the creation of *de jure* governments; the Brest-Litovsk Treaty must be cancelled and, provided a representative government could be formed, economic aid of every kind should be offered to Russia itself. Nothing was said of what should be done in case a government more representative than that of the Bolsheviks could not be formed.

III

Such was the programme approved by Wilson and upon which House was ready to stand in his discussion of the Fourteen Points with the Allied leaders. It is easy to dramatize the difference between the American and the European point of view regarding the peace settlement. Such a difference was real and inevitable. But the historian must be careful not to exaggerate it in order to gain a picturesque heightening of contrasts. The Europeans were seeking the same end as Wilson — a stable and just peace. If they had the disadvantage of being prejudiced by selfish interests, they had the advantage of understanding the problems better. Between the foregoing interpretation of Wilson's policy and Allied plans, the difference had been reduced to a minimum. The conflict would be most bitter when it came to

the detailed application of general principles which all approved.

It must not be supposed that the Allies had taken counsel to shelve the Fourteen Points. They had hardly studied them enough to have an opinion about them. What they did not like was being bound in any sense, since they had not yet weighed the implications of Wilson's programme sufficiently to be sure how much they would sacrifice if they accepted it. Hence the week following House's arrival in Paris was marked by a steady effort on their part to evade any recognition of the Fourteen Points as the basis for the peace, and an equally steady and ultimately successful effort on the part of House to extract acceptance.

The first objection to a blanket endorsement of the Fourteen Points was raised by the British, who perceived that as Germany had asked for an armistice on the basis of the Wilson programme, the Allies, in granting an armistice, would be committed to that programme unless they made explicit reservations. The British attitude towards Wilson's principles as a whole was friendly, and they already manifested some uneasiness at the possible danger resulting from French and Italian plans of annexation. But they were troubled lest the second of Wilson's points, 'absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas,' implied the abolition of the right of blockade, their chief offensive weapon in time of war. Colonel House was, in general, strongly sympathetic with British policy and he did not object to the right of blockade if it were carefully defined. He was convinced, however, that steps must be taken to prevent such interference with neutral trade as had aroused American feeling in 1915 and 1916, and he warned the British that there was dynamite in the existing condition of maritime law.

'*October* 28, 1918: Sir William Wiseman came around last night as I was going to bed,' wrote Colonel House. 'He had

just arrived from London with Lord Reading and came to tell of what had happened in England during the past few days. The Cabinet have been having some stormy sessions over the President's peace terms. They rebel against the "Freedom of the Seas" and they wish to include reparations for losses at sea.

'I told Wiseman and later to-day told Reading, that if the British were not careful they would bring upon themselves the dislike of the world. . . . I did not believe the United States and other countries would willingly submit to Great Britain's complete domination of the seas any more than to Germany's domination of the land, and the sooner the English recognized this fact, the better it would be for them; furthermore, that our people, if challenged, would build a navy and maintain an army greater than theirs. We had more money, we had more men, and our natural resources were greater. Such a programme would be popular in America and, should England give the incentive, the people would demand the rest.'

Colonel House spoke with the utmost frankness to the British leaders and at the first informal conference at the Quai d'Orsay, on October 29, made it plain to the French and the Italians as well, that he meant to insist upon the Fourteen Points as a condition of the United States joining in the Armistice negotiations.

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *October* 29, 1918

Lloyd George, Balfour, and Reading lunched with me today and George stated that it was his opinion that if the Allies submitted to Germany terms of armistice without some [reservation] Germany would assume that the Allies

COLONEL HOUSE'S APARTMENT, 78 RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ, PARIS,
WHERE ARMISTICE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE

had accepted the President's Fourteen Points and other speeches without qualification.

So far as Great Britain was concerned George stated that Point II of speech of January 8, 1918, concerning the Freedom of the Seas, could not be accepted without qualification. He admitted that if Point II was made a part of Point XIV concerning the League of Nations, and assuming that the League of Nations was such a one as Great Britain could subscribe to, it might be possible for Great Britain to accept Point II. He said he did not wish to discuss the Freedom of the Seas with Germany and if the Freedom of the Seas was made a condition of peace Great Britain could not agree to it. Before our discussion ended it seemed as though we were near an agreement concerning this matter along the lines of the interpretation of Point II heretofore cabled you.

. . . We then went to the conference at the Quai d'Orsay attended by Clemenceau, Pichon, George, Balfour, Sonnino, and myself. . . . Clemenceau and Sonnino are not at all in sympathy with the idea of a league of nations. Sonnino will probably submit many objections to the Fourteen Points. . . . An exceedingly strict censorship directed from the French War Office makes it impossible for American correspondents to send any communications to the United States respecting the progress of the present conferences. I am examining into this matter and it may be advisable to take drastic steps in order that the United States can determine for itself what news of political character shall be communicated to its people.

EDWARD HOUSE

House's hope that it might be possible quickly to reach an understanding with the British concerning Point II, was not fulfilled in the conference with the French and Sonnino. Mr. Lloyd George made plain his opinion that unless reservation were made the Allies would stand committed to the

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Wilsonian programme, and neither Clemenceau nor Sonnino was pleased by the prospect. All three seemed entirely disinclined to accept the Wilsonian programme as a whole.

'If we agree upon the terms of an armistice,' said the British Prime Minister, 'do we not assume that we accept the Fourteen Points as stated by President Wilson? Germany has asked for an armistice on condition of President Wilson's Fourteen Points being the terms of peace. If we send conditions across, it would appear that we accept those terms. Therefore we should consider whether we are prepared to accept the Fourteen Points. . . . I ask Colonel House whether the German Government is accepting terms of an armistice on the President's conditions of peace. The question is: Do we or do we not accept the whole of President Wilson's Fourteen Points? I am going to put quite clearly the points which I do not accept. Should we not make it clear to the German Government that we are not going in on the Fourteen Points of peace?'

Clemenceau at once stated that he was not inclined to commit himself and France blindly. 'Have you ever been asked by President Wilson,' he said to Lloyd George, 'whether you accept the Fourteen Points? I have never been asked.'

'I have not been asked either,' replied the British Prime Minister; and, turning to Colonel House: 'What is your view? Do you think that if we agree to an armistice we accept the President's peace terms?'

'That is my view,' replied Colonel House.

Pichon believed the matter could be pushed to one side. 'We can say to Germany that we are only stating terms of an armistice, not terms of peace.'

But the British pointed out that it was impossible to separate the different portions of the correspondence that had been passed with Germany, since the request for the

Armistice was conditioned upon the Fourteen Points. 'What we are afraid of,' added Mr. Balfour, 'is that we cannot say that we are merely interested in the terms of an armistice. For the moment, unquestionably, we are not bound by President Wilson's terms; but if we assent to an armistice without making our position clear, we shall certainly be so bound.'

'Then,' said Clemenceau, 'I want to hear the Fourteen Points.'

'Yes,' said Sonnino, none too well pleased, 'and the five more and the others.'

Thus began the discussion, which at the start seemed most inauspicious for House's hope of winning acceptance of the Wilsonian programme. The first point was read aloud: 'Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at . . .'

Clemenceau's reaction was not for a moment a matter of doubt. 'I cannot agree,' he said, 'never to make a private or secret diplomatic agreement of any kind.' To which Mr. Lloyd George added, with equal brevity and decision: 'I do not think it possible so to limit oneself.'

Colonel House, however, produced the commentary on the point, illustrated by a speech of Wilson to the Senate, showing that the proposal did not mean open conferences but merely publicity of results. He was supported by Mr. Balfour, who argued that the intent was to prohibit secret treaties.

The discussion passed to the second point, regarding the Freedom of the Seas, which Mr. Lloyd George interpreted as the abolition of the right of blockade and against which he inveighed with force.

'This point,' he insisted, 'we cannot accept under any conditions; it means that the power of blockade goes; Germany has been broken almost as much by the blockade as by military methods; if this power is to be handed over to

the League of Nations and Great Britain were fighting for her life, no league of nations would prevent her from defending herself. This power has prevented Germany from getting rubber, cotton, and food through Holland and the Scandinavian countries. Therefore my view is that I should like to see this League of Nations established first before I let this power go. If the League of Nations is a reality, I am willing to discuss the matter.'

Colonel House did not interpret the term 'Freedom of the Seas' to mean the abolition of the principle of blockade; for him it signified merely a codification of maritime usage that would sanctify the doctrine of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war. Unless the British recognized the demand of the United States that their trade with neutrals be allowed to go unhampered on the high seas, it was certain that British control of the seas would be resented; inevitably the United States would feel the need of building a navy capable of protecting its trade. House did not conceal his fear that, apart from the perils of naval competition, in case of another war British interference with American trade would throw the United States into the arms of Great Britain's enemy, whoever that might be.

'Great Britain,' he said, 'might find itself at war with some other Power, possibly France; in the past war the sympathy of the United States had been with the Allies, because of Germany's abominable naval practices; in a future war if France did not resort to any of these practices and was the weaker naval power, the sympathy of the United States might be with France.'

The French and the Italians were not impressed by the dangers to Anglo-American amity that might proceed from British control of the sea unless regulated by a revision of

maritime law. Furthermore, they had their own objections to the Fourteen Points, and they readily joined with Mr. Lloyd George in opposition to a general endorsement of them. The Italian Foreign Secretary demanded that the President be informed categorically that at this time the Allies could give him no assurance that his Points would be acceptable. It was impossible, said Sonnino, to agree upon a peace programme at the moment of making the Armistice. As regards British use of naval power, 'it had to be remembered that nations, like animals, had different weapons; one animal had teeth, another tusks, another claws, and so it was with nations.' All that could be done at the moment, he felt, was to settle the military and naval terms of the Armistice; the bases of peace must be left until later.

Such postponement of an agreement upon principles was, of course, exactly what House desired to avoid. So long as Germany was still in the field and the Allies were uncertain of her acceptance of the Armistice, the influence of the United States remained very strong; once Germany had surrendered, it might prove easier for the Allies to disregard that influence and make any sort of peace they pleased. Colonel House, accordingly, maintained inflexibly the position which he had assumed. If the Allies persisted in their refusal to accept the Fourteen Points, upon which Germany based her request for an armistice, there could be only one result: the negotiations with Germany would have to be wiped off the slate; President Wilson would have no alternative but to tell the enemy that his conditions were not accepted by the Allies. The question would then arise whether America would not have to take these matters up directly with Germany and Austria.

'That would amount,' said Clemenceau, 'to a separate peace between the United States and the Central Powers.'

'It might,' replied Colonel House.

'My statement,' he telegraphed the President, 'had a very exciting effect on those present.'

The suggestion was bound to have such an effect and was doubtless so designed, not merely because the withdrawal of the United States from coöperation with the Allies would necessarily touch very closely their economic welfare (for they counted upon American assistance during the period of reconstruction), but also because of the moral influence exercised by President Wilson at this time in Europe. He was generally regarded as the leader of liberal opinion in the world, and the news of a break between him and the Allied Premiers might have the most direct bearing upon the political fortunes of the latter.

But for the moment they showed no willingness to change their attitude. 'If the United States made a separate peace,' asserted Lloyd George, 'we would be sorry, but we could not give up the blockade, the power which enabled us to live; as far as the British public is concerned, we will fight on.' 'Yes,' interjected Clemenceau, 'I cannot understand the meaning of the doctrine [Freedom of the Seas]. War would not be war if there was freedom of the seas.' [1]

House was anxious to give the Premiers an opportunity to consider the consequences of a refusal to accept Wilson's conditions; also he wanted to try his hand at individual discussion. He suggested therefore that:

'It is for France, England, and Italy to get together to limit their acceptance of the fourteen conditions; that would be the first preliminary to working out the Armistice.'

He was seconded by Balfour, who preserved his invariable poise and did not lose sight of the fact that with few exceptions the Allies would probably be willing to agree to the Wilsonian programme. On the points at issue, a compromise might be arranged. He emphasized the evident intent of Germany 'to drive a wedge between the Associated Powers,' and urged the strongest effort to avoid this trap.

[1] 'The "Freedom of the Seas" nearly broke up the Conference,' wrote Sir William Wiseman.

Lloyd George also became conciliatory and intimated that except for Point II the British had no objections to raise.

'Let us all of us,' he added, 'go on with the terms of the Armistice, and in the mean time each of us, France, Great Britain, and Italy, make a draft of our reservations of the Fourteen Points and see to-morrow whether we cannot agree upon a common draft.'

The others were evidently disappointed by the thought of even this attempt to meet Wilson's terms. Sonnino complained that Point IX, touching Italian frontiers, was inadequate from the Italian point of view. The question whether President Wilson's speeches made clear the need of reparations was raised; and Clemenceau asked what he meant by 'equality of trade conditions.' Finally the British suggestion of attempting a draft of reservations was adopted, and the conference adjourned.

IV

Colonel House was depressed by the course of the conversation, although he had not concealed from himself the difficulties which he would encounter. His best hope lay in coming to an understanding with the British, for Mr. Lloyd George had intimated strongly that apart from the 'Freedom of the Seas' and a definition of reparations, he was willing to support Wilson's principles. If Mr. Lloyd George would join with House to persuade the French and Italians to accept the rest of the Fourteen Points, and if the British would agree that the revision of maritime law should be discussed at the Peace Conference, he felt that he would have secured all that was possible in the circumstances. He concentrated his arguments, therefore, on the British, urging the vital importance of accepting the President's programme,

if the cordiality of Anglo-American relations both at the Conference and in the future were to be assured.

At the same time he informed Wilson fully of the situation in Paris and sought from him definite authority which would enable him to stand firm in the face of opposition to the Fourteen Points. President Wilson replied with a clear-cut statement implying that American participation in the Peace Conference depended upon acceptance of the Points to which especial objection had been raised. The whole question of the continuance of the coöperation of the United States with Europe seemed to be involved. The official paraphrase of the President's cipher cable, which was sent on October 30, is as follows:

I feel it my solemn duty to authorize you to say that I cannot consent to take part in the negotiations of a peace which does not include the Freedom of the Seas, because we are pledged to fight not only Prussian militarism but militarism everywhere.

Neither could I participate in a settlement which does not include a League of Nations because such a peace would result within a period of years in there being no guarantee except universal armaments, which would be disastrous. I hope I shall not be obliged to make this decision public.

Wilson's final sentence, indicating his willingness to threaten a public discussion of the differences between Allied and American peace principles, was in line with a course of action which House had already pondered. On the evening following the conference of October 29, he cast about in his mind for means to persuade Clemenceau and Sonnino to withdraw their objections. His diary of October 30 records his decision:

'This morning around three o'clock, I was awakened by

the motor-cycles of our messengers leaving the house with despatches for Washington which had just been put into code. Every night since we have been here the staff has been up until three or four o'clock in the morning. The despatches for Washington cannot be prepared and written until the evening, and the coding takes practically all night. It is necessary to get these despatches into Washington by the early morning and the staff works at top speed during the night.

'I fell to thinking about the dilemma I was in with the three Prime Ministers. It then occurred to me there was a way out of the difficulty. I would tell them that if they did not accept the President's Fourteen Points and other terms enunciated since January 8, I would advise the President to go before Congress and lay the facts before it, giving the terms which England, France, and Italy insisted upon, and ask the advice of Congress whether the United States should make peace with Germany now that she has accepted the American terms, or whether we should go on fighting until Germany had accepted the terms of France, England, and Italy, whatever they might be. . . . I turned over and went to sleep, knowing I had found a solution of a very troublesome problem.'

The last thing desired by the Allied Premiers was a debate on war aims such as would result from laying the matter before Congress. At the moment they could not openly repudiate Wilson's principles, so high was his prestige in England, France, and Italy; nor would they dare to take the responsibility of continuing the war without the moral and economic support of the United States, which, in view of the disorganization of Europe, was likely to become increasingly important.

It was thus with renewed hope that House met Mr. Lloyd George on the morning of the 30th, before the conference

which was to be held with Clemenceau at the War Office later in the morning. He found the British Prime Minister more conciliatory. He had drafted a memorandum of British reservations, which was almost identical with that finally adopted by the Allies, and differed both in temper and substance from the objections raised on the day before.

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *October* 30, 1918

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I met for forty-five minutes this morning at the office of the Minister of War. Just before we entered Clemenceau's office, George handed me a proposed answer to the President which the British authorities had drafted. I quote the draft in full:

'The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses. They must point out, however, that clause two, relating to what is usually described as Freedom of the Seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must therefore reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the Peace Conference.

'Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be

made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies, and their property by the forces of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.'

I told George that I was afraid his attitude at yesterday's meeting had opened the floodgates and that Clemenceau and Sonnino would have elaborate memoranda to submit, containing their objections to the President's Fourteen Points, and that I doubted whether Clemenceau would accept the answer as drafted by the British, which was in marked contrast to the position taken by George yesterday.

It at once developed at the conference that Clemenceau was having prepared an elaborate brief setting forth France's objections to the President's Fourteen Points. I promptly pointed out to Clemenceau that undoubtedly Sonnino was preparing a similar memorandum and that if the Allied Governments felt constrained to submit an elaborate answer to the President containing many objections to his programme, it would doubtless be necessary for the President to go to Congress and to place before that body exactly what Italy, France, and Great Britain were fighting for and to place the responsibility upon Congress for the further continuation of the war by the United States in behalf of the aims of the Allies. . . .

Clemenceau at once abandoned his idea of submitting an elaborate memorandum concerning the President's Fourteen Points and apparently accepted the proposed answer drafted by the British. I suggested that the word 'illegal' be placed before the words 'damage done to the civilian population of the Allies,' in last sentence of draft of the proposed answer. George accepted the suggestion, but Clemenceau stated that he preferred that the draft should be left as it was. I believe that the suggestion would be accepted by all, if the President sees fit to insist upon it. I am not entirely clear yet that this is necessary. . . .

In the event that the answer drafted by the British and

quoted above is adopted by the Allies as their answer to your communication, I would strongly advise your accepting it without alteration.[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

Clemenceau's acquiescence in the British draft strengthened House's position enormously, for he could now count upon French and British aid in persuading the Italians to withdraw or soften their objections. At the afternoon meeting of the Prime Ministers and the Foreign Secretaries on October 30, Lloyd George produced his draft memorandum and proposed its acceptance as the reply to President Wilson.

The Italians at once objected. 'I have also prepared a draft,' said Sonnino, 'on the subject of the ninth clause of President Wilson's Fourteen Points [Italian frontiers]. If we adopt this interpretation of the Fourteen Points [the British interpretation] as regards Germany, will it not appear that we adopt them also for Austria?'

Lloyd George, however, gave him no support, and pointed out that it was the German armistice that was under consideration: 'It has nothing to do with Austria.'

'Yes,' said Sonnino, very acutely, 'but if we state our concurrence in the Fourteen Points, subject to the observations made by Mr. Lloyd George, it will be assumed that the whole of the remainder are accepted and the case of an armistice with Austria will be prejudiced. It will be assumed that the clauses applying to Austria are also accepted.'

Despite the protests of both the British and the French that the reservation on Italian frontiers had nothing to do with the German armistice, Sonnino insisted upon reading his drafted observation on the President's conditions, as follows:

[1] In his reply to this President Wilson cabled to House on October 31: 'I am proud of the way you are handling the situation.'

'The Italian Government considers that the "readjustment" mentioned in Point IX does not imply a mere rectification of frontiers; but that it means that Italy shall obtain the liberation of the provinces whose nationality is Italian, and at the same time shall establish a frontier between Italy and Austria-Hungary, or the other states which until now have formed part of Austria-Hungary, that offers the essential conditions of military security sufficient to assure independence and the maintenance of peace, in view of geographic and historic factors, and with the application of the same principles as those affirmed in the case of Germany in the matter of territorial delimitation consequent upon the present war.'

The observation was, in truth, so phrased as to render President Wilson's Point IX quite meaningless, for by its vague comprehensiveness it would have enabled Italy to claim far-flung territories. National, geographic, strategic, historic factors were all adduced, as well as the intimation that any argument utilized by France to strengthen herself against Germany might also be utilized by Italy to annex the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

The Italian representatives were clearly anxious that this observation should be formally written into the memorandum sent to Wilson. But they received no encouragement from either the French or British. House reiterated his warning that any radical objection to the Fourteen Points would necessitate Wilson's going to Congress and opening the issue to public discussion. Clemenceau insisted that the reservation of Sonnino could not be inserted in the note applying to Germany. 'It would be just as relevant to put into the note referring to Austria-Hungary some observations about Alsace-Lorraine.' And Lloyd George pointed out that its insertion in a note to Austria could be considered later, 'although he himself hoped it would not be inserted.'

Sonnino again protested that there was danger that events would prevent the opportunity of making their reservation, and that while he was willing to accept Lloyd George's text in so far as it applied to Germany, so far as Austria was concerned the proposal was quite insufficient. But Clemenceau broke in:

'Are we agreed regarding the reply to Germany? I accept. Lloyd George accepts. [Turning to Orlando:] Do you accept?'

'Yes,' said Orlando.

In this way Italy's reservation was excluded from the pre-Armistice agreement.

IV

As a result of this conversation, it seemed likely that, except for the two observations contained in the British draft, House would secure formal acceptance of the President's terms of peace.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *October* 31, 1918

Everything is changing for the better since yesterday, and I hope you will not insist upon my using your cable except as I may think best.

If you will give me a free hand in dealing with these immediate negotiations, I can assure you that nothing will be done to embarrass you or to compromise any of your peace principles. You will have as free a hand after the Armistice is signed as you now have. It is exceedingly important that nothing be said or done at this time which may in any way halt the Armistice which will save so many thousands of lives. Negotiations are now proceeding satisfactorily.

EDWARD HOUSE

The Fourteen Points had to run the gauntlet again at the formal meetings of the Supreme War Council on October 31 and November 1. At the latter, Hymans, speaking for Belgium, raised the question of Point III, which called for an equality of trade conditions, and Point V, relating to the colonies. Special dispositions would have to be made, he insisted, to protect Belgium against the invasion of German exports. He would be compelled also to insist upon the integrity of Belgium's colonies. He received some support from Lloyd George and from Vesnitch, who spoke in behalf of Serbia. Orlando again raised the question of reservations on Point IX.

In each case, however, Colonel House urged postponement, evidently not wishing to inaugurate a detailed discussion in the formal sessions and preferring to thresh out differences in the smaller meetings. On November 3 the Prime Ministers met again, with Hymans, at House's headquarters, to discuss the note to the President.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 3, 1918

. . . The Belgians are protesting Articles III and V of the Fourteen Points. The Italians are protesting Article IX.

The three Prime Ministers meet this afternoon at three o'clock at my headpuarters to discuss the Fourteen Points. As a matter of fact Clemenceau and Orlando will accept anything that the English will agree to concerning Article II [Freedom of the Seas]. I have spent almost every minute outside my conferences discussing this article with the British. I am insisting that they must recognize the principle that it is a subject for discussion at the Peace Conference or before, and I am having the greatest difficulty in getting them to admit even that much. I have contended that they might as

well refuse to accept the principle that laws governing war upon land formed a subject for discussion. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

At this meeting, Lloyd George and Hymans again called attention to Point III, 'the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers.' The latter asked that a reservation be made which would permit Belgium freely to secure raw materials and to protect herself against dumping during the period of reconstruction. 'We shall need a barrier,' he said, 'to keep out German products. She could easily swamp our markets.'

'France and Belgium,' replied House, 'are certainly going to be able to get all the raw materials they need. No one wants to interfere with such imports. As to German exports, we have got to remember that Germany must necessarily pay out thousands of millions and that she must be in a condition to pay them. If we prevent her from making a living, she will not be able to pay.'

The argument was difficult to answer, especially for the French and Belgians who counted upon German reparations. Clemenceau suggested that there was really no need of objection to Wilson's demand for the removal of trade barriers, since the clause was modified by the words 'so far as possible.' Lloyd George agreed that this would protect their interests sufficiently, if the words were placed at the head of the entire article. If this were done, no reservation would be necessary. House agreed and further objections of Hymans were brushed aside.

'I think,' said the Belgian Foreign Minister, 'that we should have a more ample phrase than merely, "damages to the civilian population."'

'It is then for indirect compensation that you ask?' said Lloyd George.

'I do not ask for it now,' replied Hymans, 'but I should like to have a phrase referring to it.'

'I think it will be a mistake to put into the Armistice terms,' insisted Lloyd George, 'anything that will lead Germany to suppose that we want a war indemnity.' [1]

House naturally agreed and, upon Clemenceau's accepting Point III without further addition, it was decided to leave it as it stood except for the transposition of the words 'so far as possible.'

Orlando's attempt to insert a reservation on Point IX was equally unsuccessful. The situation was a curious one in that the Armistice terms had already been despatched to Austria directly and not through the interposition of President Wilson, as in the case of the German terms. Thus there had been no chance to inform Wilson of Italy's desire to make reservations on this point. Now, in sending their note regarding German terms, neither Lloyd George nor Clemenceau admitted the relevance of the Italian objection. Lloyd George thought that the attention of the President might be called to the fact that Point IX did not affect Germany.

'I think,' suggested House, 'that it would be better to say nothing at all on this matter to President Wilson. It would be inadvisable to increase the number of exceptions.'

'Yes,' agreed Clemenceau, 'it is desirable to suggest as few changes or reservations as possible to the Fourteen Points.'

Failing encouragement, Orlando desisted from pressing his reservation, and no more was heard of Italian objections until the following spring at the Peace Conference. Whether or not the Fourteen Points applied to the Austrian peace settlement, as it did to the German, is a problem that was never clearly decided. It is true that Sonnino had formulated and read to the two Prime Ministers and House a draft

[1] This brief interchange between Hymans and Lloyd George is of historical importance since it indicates clearly that in the opinion of those who drafted the Armistice the phrase 'damage to the civilian population' did not cover 'indirect compensation' such as payment for war costs and pensions.

of Italian objections.[1] But this was never formally presented to the Supreme War Council, nor was it sent to the Austrians, who like the Germans had asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points; nor was it ever formally communicated to President Wilson. Colonel House evidently regarded the Allies as bound to the President's terms in the case of Austria. On October 31, in cabling Lansing that the Austrian armistice terms were on their way, he added:

'It is my opinion that the submission of terms of armistice to Austria in the circumstances and without any express qualifications, may be construed as an acceptance on the part of the Allies of the President's proposals.'

V

The withdrawal of Belgian and Italian objections to the note to be sent Wilson, left House to face the two reservations already drafted by the British. That regarding the meaning of reparations was satisfactory to him. He understood it to signify that Germany would make reparation for all direct damage done the civilian population. It would seem from Lloyd George's discussion with Hymans that neither he nor the others understood it to include responsibility for indirect damage, nor to be in the nature of a war indemnity.

As regards the reservation on the Freedom of the Seas, House was not satisfied and the President even less. The wording of the reservation would make it possible for the Allies to refuse even to discuss the matter at the Peace Conference. Wilson wanted nothing less than an explicit ac-

[1] It is interesting to note that in the reservation suggested by Sonnino, the basis for Italian objections to Point IX was not the fact that the Treaty of London already had provided a new boundary for Italy and determined its nature, but rather certain indefinite geographic, historic, and strategic factors.

ceptance of the principle of the Freedom of the Seas. He authorized House to say that if they would not accept it they could 'count on the certainty of our using our present equipment to build up the strongest navy that our resources permit and as our people have long desired.' [1]

House worked assiduously to explain to the British how strongly the American Government felt that there must be a revision of maritime law, and a guarantee that in future wars neutral trade should not be interfered with, except according to generally accepted and approved rules.

Sir William Wiseman later wrote: 'The difficulty was to phrase so vague and yet so far-reaching and vital a principle. The British leaders were in general agreement with House, but the sailors arrived at the conference breathing fire. The British feared that they might be committing themselves too far, and that the country would reject anything that appeared to be giving up their sea power. This is easy enough to understand if we realize that the British Empire had experienced a war in which they would have been at the mercy of the enemy at any moment if their naval power had not protected them. . . . House believed a policy could be developed so as to afford the protection to the British Empire which they quite naturally demanded, and at the same time meet the principle that Wilson was trying to evolve.'

'*November* 1, 1918: I sent for Sir William Wiseman immediately upon my return from Versailles,' wrote House in his diary, 'and told him that unless Lloyd George would make some reasonable concessions in his attitude upon the 'Freedom of the Seas,' all hope of Anglo-Saxon unity would be at an end; that the United States went to war with England in 1812 on the question of her rights at sea, and that she had gone to war with Germany in 1917 upon the same question.

[1] Wilson to House, November 4, 1918.

I did not believe that even if the President wished to do so, he could avoid this issue; and if Lloyd George expressed the British viewpoint as he indicates, there would be greater feeling against Great Britain at the end of the war than there had been since our Civil War. I again repeated, with as much emphasis as I could, that our people would not consent to allow the British Government, or any other Government, to determine upon what terms our ships should sail the seas, either in time of peace or in time of war.

'Wiseman is taking the matter up with his people to-night and will let me know to-morrow.

'*November* 2, 1918: Lord Northcliffe lunched with me. He offered the use of his publications in any way desired. At this interview I merely gave him a glimpse of my difficulties. . . .

'Lord Reading and Wiseman were waiting to take up the troublesome question of the "Freedom of the Seas." We worked at it for more than two hours, but "got nowhere." . . .

'I said to Reading that they took the same attitude Germany took in the spring of 1914 regarding her army. The Germans declared that all the bayonets of Europe were pointed at Germany and that it was essential to her existence not to consent to even modified disarmament. They contended that their army was not for aggression, and pointed out that of all the great Powers, Germany was the only one that had not made territorial conquests for nearly a half-century. But Germany came to grief, and in my opinion it was inevitable that Great Britain would likewise have cause to regret such an arbitrary attitude.

'*November* 4, 1918: It is difficult to fully tell of the tense feeling that has prevailed due to the discussion of the Fourteen Points. George and I, and Reading and I have had many conferences, separately and together. . . .

'Lloyd George said that Great Britain would spend her last guinea to keep a navy superior to that of the United

States or any other Power, and that no Cabinet official could continue in the Government in England who took a different position. I countered this by telling him it was not our purpose to go into a naval building rivalry with Great Britain, but it was our purpose to have our rights at sea adequately safeguarded, and that we did not intend to have our commerce regulated by Great Britain whenever she was at war.

'After we had this debate, George sent Reading around to argue the matter with me. . . . I told Reading he was wasting his breath, that in no circumstances would we yield the point about the Freedom of the Seas being a matter for discussion between our two Governments. I insisted that sooner or later we would come to a clash if an understanding was not reached as to laws governing the seas. I let him know that it was not my intention to budge and that I had the backing of the President.'

The importance of reaching some understanding on this point with the British, so House believed, transcended every other political question except that of the League of Nations, with which it was closely connected. For six years he had insisted that the surest guarantee of world tranquillity was to be found in the close political friendship of the English-speaking peoples. This conviction had inspired his attitude on all his trips abroad as representative of President Wilson, and it had been intensified by the war. To meet the social and economic confusion certain to follow the war, to drag order from chaos, a League of Nations was essential; and House believed that the success of the League would depend in large measure upon the enduring coöperation of the United States, Great Britain, and her overseas Dominions.

The sole obstacle to Anglo-American friendship lay in the question of British naval policy. There was always the danger that in time of future war, as in 1915, a crisis might arise which would touch American susceptibilities and interests.

House did not wish to wait until national feelings were strained, before attempting to remove the possible cause of quarrel. The moment when Great Britain and the United States were still bound by the common effort against Germany was, he insisted, the moment most suitable to obviate any possibility of a future clash between British and American naval policy. If the British would agree to discuss the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, he believed that it would not be impossible to reach such an understanding as would settle the rules of maritime transport in war-time to American satisfaction, and also lead to the abolition of competition in naval armaments. But if the British rejected summarily the American demand for a revision of those rules, the cloud of future quarrels would hang upon the horizon.

VI

At the meeting of November 3, House planned to ask the British to accept explicitly the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, as Wilson desired. This, as he knew, would be refused. What was essential, as a minimum, was to receive from them a guarantee that the reservation they had proposed would not exclude full and free discussion of the principle at the Peace Conference. He began by presenting a paraphrase of a cablegram of October 31 from President Wilson, commenting upon the draft note of the Allies:

'The President says that he freely and sympathetically recognizes the necessities of the British and their strong position with regard to the seas, both at home and throughout the Empire. Freedom of the Seas he realizes is a question upon which there should be the freest discussion and the most liberal exchange of views. The President is not sure, however, that the Allies have definitely accepted the principle of the Freedom of the Seas and that they are reserving only the limitations and free discussions of the subject.

'The President insists that terms I, II, III, and XIV [1] are essentially American terms in the programme and he cannot recede from them. The question of the Freedom of the Seas need not be discussed with the German Government, provided we have agreed amongst ourselves beforehand.

'Blockade is one of the questions which has been altered by the developments in this war and the law governing it will certainly have to be altered. There is no danger, however, that it will be abolished.' [2]

Mr. Lloyd George at once made plain that he was not inclined to change the reservation he had drafted, and he threw out lines for help from Orlando and Clemenceau. 'This is not merely a question for Great Britain, but also for France and Italy. We have all benefited by the blockade which prevented steel, copper, rubber, and many other classes of goods from entering Germany. This has been a very important element in the defeat of the enemy.'

'Yes,' said House, 'but the President does not object to the principle of the blockade. He merely asks that the principle of the Freedom of the Seas be accepted.'

Clemenceau, to whom House had been talking, inter-

[1] Open Diplomacy, Freedom of the Seas, Levelling of Trade Barriers, League of Nations.

[2] House omitted from this paraphrase a sentence of the cable in which President Wilson reiterated his threat that if the Freedom of the Seas were not accepted, he might have to lay the matter before 'Congress who will have no sympathy or wishes that American life and property shall be sacrificed for British naval control.'

Wilson and House in stating that the Freedom of the Seas did not imply the abolition of blockade meant that, while private property on the high seas should go unmolested, the rules regarding the blockade of ports might remain unchanged. They doubtless had in mind the American proposal before the Hague Conference in 1907: 'The private property of all citizens of the signatory Powers, with the exception of contraband of war, shall be exempt from capture or seizure at sea by the armed vessels or military forces of the said Powers. However, this provision in no way implies the inviolability of vessels which may attempt to enter a port blockaded by the naval forces of the above-mentioned Powers, nor of the cargoes of the said vessels.'

jected: 'I do not see any reason for not accepting the principle. We accept'; and, turning to Mr. Lloyd George with bluff *bonhommie:* 'you do also, do you not?'

But on this Lloyd George was firm. 'No,' he said, 'I could not accept the principle of the Freedom of the Seas. It has got associated in the public mind with the blockade. It's no good saying I accept the principle. It would only mean that in a week's time a new Prime Minister would be here who would say that he could not accept this principle. The English people will not look at it. On this point the nation is absolutely solid. It's no use for me to say that I can accept when I know that I am not speaking for the British nation.'

Then, asked House, if the principle itself could not be accepted at this time, were the British ready to discuss it freely at the Peace Conference? Or did the reservation contained in the draft imply a peremptory challenge of Wilson's position?

'This formula does not in the least challenge the position of the United States,' said Lloyd George. 'All we say is that we reserve the freedom to discuss the point when we go to the Peace Conference. I don't despair of coming to an agreement.'

'I wish you would write something I could send the President,' said House.

'Will he like something of this kind?' returned Lloyd George: '"We are quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas and its application."'

House agreed, and with this compromise the matter was left for the consideration of the Peace Conference.

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House

PARIS, *November* 3, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I write to confirm the statement I made in the course of our talk this afternoon at your house when I told you that

'we were quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas in the light of the new conditions which have arisen in the course of the present war.' In our judgment this most important subject can only be dealt with satisfactorily through the freest debate and the most liberal exchange of views.

I send you this letter after having had an opportunity of talking the matter over with the Foreign Secretary who quite agrees.

Ever sincerely

D. LLOYD GEORGE

Thus, through the insistence of Colonel House and the willingness of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour to meet him halfway, an opportunity was created to settle once and for all the sole enduring factor of difference between Great Britain and the United States. With the growth of American overseas trade, it was inevitable that there should come a demand for a navy capable of protecting it; unless some guarantee of its protection could be found in international law, the rapid development of the American navy and a competition in naval armaments were almost certain. The solution which House offered was not new; it was simply the combination of the British proposal to abolish contraband and the American proposal to recognize the immunity of private property on the high seas, both of which had been advanced at the Hague Conference in 1907.[1]

The opportunity to eliminate Anglo-American naval rivalry was not developed at the Peace Conference, presumably because of the faith that President Wilson put in the League of Nations. With the United States remaining outside of the League, the problem of naval rivalry was bound to reappear and, despite the Washington Treaties, to

[1] Five Powers, including the United States, had voted against the British proposal, and eleven Powers, including Great Britain, had voted against the American proposal.

assume a sinister aspect. Thus after the failure of the Geneva Conference of 1927, the proposal of the Freedom of the Seas was once more advanced. In Great Britain voices were raised in defense of a reconsideration of the problem. 'The one nation that can be successfully blockaded,' wrote Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy, 'is Britain, and yet we cling to the weapon which may possibly bring about our destruction.' Viscount Cecil of Chelwood demanded a careful reëxamination of the problem: 'We should aim at such a change in belligerent rights at sea as will enable us to feed our people in war-time without risk of hostile capture.'[1]

'We all profess a desire,' wrote Colonel House, 'to reach an agreement regarding naval disarmament and strangely neglect to seek our ends by this simplest of all methods. . . . Great Britain has elected to maintain her defense through a navy rather than a large army, therefore there could be no objection to as large a navy as she desired, provided it was not used to blockade or interfere with enemy or neutral commerce in time of war. . . . With the Freedom of the Seas guaranteed by covenant between nations, there would be no incentive for the United States, France, Germany, or Russia or other Powers to maintain navies larger than sufficient for police purposes. To say that such a treaty would not be regarded in time of stress is to condemn all treaties. . . . The benefits which would accrue to Great Britain through the Freedom of the Seas would be free communication with her Dominions, and the certainty that her food supply and raw materials could never be interrupted. Such a policy would eliminate the terrors of submarine warfare, for sub-

[1] The *Times*, November 27, 1927. Cf. also W. R. Pringle in the *British Weekly*: 'Naval opinion here is by no means unanimous in upholding the old British theory of belligerent rights. Eminent naval authorities believe that under modern conditions, in view of the probabilities of the future, Great Britain has more to gain by abandoning the old rules than by adhering to them. There is certainly, in the interests of both countries and for the sake of peace, the strongest case for discussion and negotiation.'

marines could be used only against battleships and craft of war.' [1]

It was this prospect which, at the time of the Armistice, Colonel House believed might be opened up as the result of the letter of Mr. Lloyd George, agreeing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas. His faith in the reasonableness of the plan was such that he was convinced that calm discussion alone was necessary to transform it from a vision to a fact.

VII

On November 4 the Supreme War Council approved formally the Allied memorandum to President Wilson, which reserved free discussion on Point II, the Freedom of the Seas, and defined the meaning of 'reparation.' The memorandum carried definite endorsement of Wilson's Fourteen Points in other respects. It was sent to the President, and on November 5 was forwarded by him to the Germans together with a note informing them that terms could be received from Marshal Foch.

This note, including the memorandum, is of vital importance. 'It constitutes the formal and written offer of the Allied and Associated States to conclude with Germany (a) an armistice convention, and (b) a treaty of peace. This offer, it is conceived, was accepted by Germany by the act of sending representatives, through military channels, to meet Marshal Foch for the purpose of arranging an armistice. By the acceptance of the offer a solemn agreement was reached which served, both morally and legally, as the basis of the armistice convention and the treaty of peace.' [2]

Both Germany and the Allies accepted this pre-armistice agreement as the basis upon which peace should be settled. The formal protests of the German delegates against the

[1] Colonel House in *Contemporary Review*, April, 1928.

[2] Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference*, I, 382.

Versailles Treaty, in May, 1919, were founded on the allegation that the Treaty was not in accord with the principles of the agreement, that is, the Fourteen Points and later addresses of the President. The Allied and Associated Powers, although they denied the truth of the allegation, acknowledged the validity of the agreement.[1]

Thus were the Fourteen Points endorsed and the success of Colonel House's main mission assured.

Colonel House to President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 5, 1918

I consider that we have won a . . . diplomatic victory in getting the Allies to accept the principles laid down in your January 8 speech and in your subsequent addresses. This has been done in the face of a hostile and influential junta in the United States and the thoroughly unsympathetic personnel constituting the Entente Governments. . . .

E. M. HOUSE

'I am glad the exceptions were made,' House wrote in his diary the previous evening, 'for it emphasizes the acceptance of the Fourteen Points. If they had not dissented in any way, but had let the Armistice be made without protest, they would have been in a better position at the Peace Conference to object to them.'

The Allied Governments had committed themselves to the American peace programme, and the opportunity of actually achieving the essentials of Wilsonian idealism was

[1] 'The Allied and Associated Powers are in complete accord with the German Delegation in their insistence that the basis for the negotiation of the treaty of peace is to be found in the correspondence which immediately preceded the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918.' *Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the Observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace*, 17.

opened. 'Frankly,' wrote Mr. Walter Lippmann to Colonel House, 'I did not believe it was humanly feasible, under conditions as they seemed to be in Europe, to win so glorious a victory. This is a climax of a course that has been as wise as it was brilliant, and as shrewd as it was prophetic. The President and you have more than justified the faith of those who insisted that your leadership was a turning point in modern history.' The significance of the achievement was recognized equally by the newspapers which had not been enthusiastic supporters of Wilson's policy. So much is indicated by the following despatch of November 25 from Paris to the New York *Herald:*

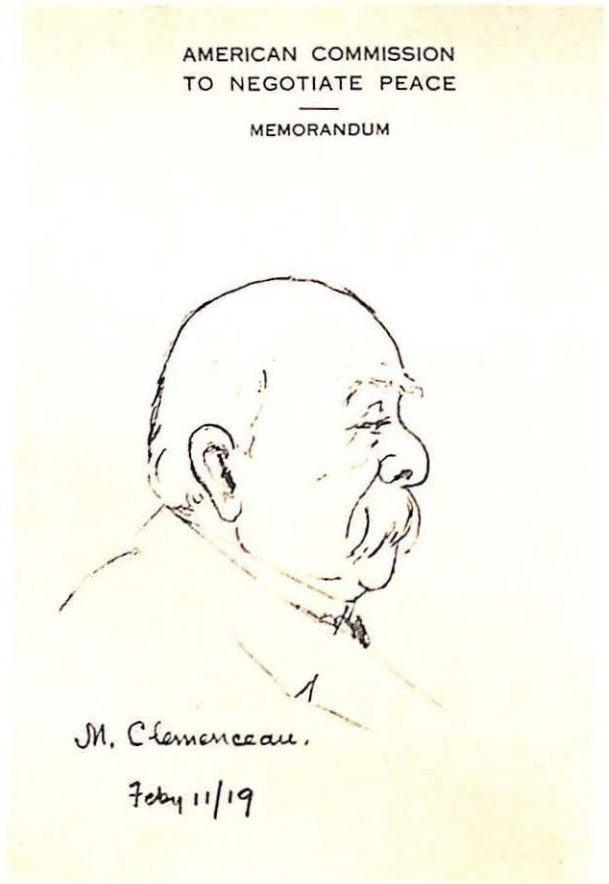
'The United States Government's immense diplomatic success in obtaining from the Allied Governments acceptance of President Wilson's points, with only one reservation and addition, is becoming daily more apparent as the preliminaries for the approaching peace congress are being outlined largely on the basis of the President's points. Colonel E. M. House . . . when he arrived here, found little disposition among American and European friends to accept as a totality the framework of peace as expressed by President Wilson. Some European statesmen considered that the points had worked as a good solvent upon Germany, that they had served their great purpose in their effect upon German unity, but that they should not be observed too closely when it came to formulating the practical details of the settlement.' [1]

It was perhaps of equal importance that the acceptance of the Fourteen Points had been achieved without any weakening of the coöperative spirit between the United States and European leaders, a coöperative spirit that was essential to the success of the Peace Conference. The debates on the

[1] New York *Herald*, November 26, 1918.

Armistice had raised many issues of sharp controversy, but it is noteworthy that following them the relations of House with the British, French, Italians, Belgians, Poles, and Serbs were more and not less cordial. His position rested primarily upon the fact that he was the representative of President Wilson, who as chief of the strongest nation in the world and as moral leader was at the summit of his world influence. This position House strengthened by his personal qualities, so that as time passed it was as an individual rather than as a representative that he held the confidence of European statesmen. 'His advice is sought,' wrote Mr. Lippmann to the head of the American Inquiry, 'because it is believed to be a little nearer this world than the President's and a good deal nearer heaven than that of Lloyd George and Sonnino.'

The most significant of these personal relationships was the friendship that developed between House and Clemenceau. Despite a basic difference in political point of view, for House was an ardent advocate of Wilsonian idealism which Clemenceau did not pretend to understand, there was between the two a common love of plain speaking and perhaps a similarity in sense of humor which drew them together. At the moment of concluding the Armistice, Clemenceau in the presence of Pichon guaranteed that he would raise no issue at the Peace Conference without full warning to House, who in return promised an equal frankness. There was thus always between the French and the Americans an open channel of communication which on more than one occasion lessened the dangers of misunderstanding. The events of the Conference, where the two worked together and against each other, set the seal on this friendship. When later Clemenceau planned a tour in the United States, it was to House that he went for advice. 'I said to the Associated Press,' he wrote to House in 1922, 'that I would arrange all matters with my American friends. All those gentlemen find themselves summed up in you. . . . Now I do not move until I hear from



SKETCHES OF CLEMENCEAU AND PICHON BY MR. LANSING

you.'[1] Colonel House's feelings towards Clemenceau were a mixture of affection and admiration, into which no suggestion of misunderstanding ever intruded. Ten years after, House wrote of him:

'In all my experience I have never met a man who made upon me a more lasting impression. Squat of figure, with massive head, penetrating eyes, wide apart and clouded by heavy, irregular eyebrows, overhanging mustache, high cheekbones, he presents with his eternal skullcap and suède gloves a gnome-like appearance. As he used to sit, hour after hour, presiding over conferences, with eyes half closed, his face was a masque. But behind it burned unquenchable fires — fires kindled by the Germans in 1870 and to which they added fuel in 1914–18.

'I saw much of him during the days of the Interallied Conference in '17, and even more when we met to make the Armistice a year later. Perhaps I came as near fathoming his soul as any one, for he seemed to have no reserve when we were alone. I never caught him seeking self-advantage; it was France — always his beloved France.

'He came at problems by direct attack, there was no indirection. There he stood almost alone among the old-line diplomats and some of the fledglings, also, who sought to imitate them. His courage was too unyielding to permit of dissimulation. He was afraid of nothing, present or to come, and least of all mere man. He was a maker of epigrams, and his wit was caustic. Friend and foe suffered alike, for he was strangely impartial when a joint in the human armor was exposed. His *bons mots* are current all over France and beyond, and will grow as time rolls on, for they have within them the vital quality of truth.

'Although we were often on opposite sides of a question, I never found him unfair. When he made a promise, no writ-

[1] Clemenceau to House, September 10, 13, 1922.

ten word was necessary. When one recalls the wide differences in the views of the United States and England, and those of France, it is remarkable that he succeeded in obtaining the Treaty of Versailles.

'France knows what she owes him for his services during the war, but has not yet realized what he did for her in the making of peace. This realization will come with time, and the children of to-day will see a happy, prosperous, glorified France lay her unqualified homage at the feet of Georges Clemenceau.' [1]

Each spring that House came to Europe after the war, he did not fail to visit the retired statesman, generally in his solitary retreat in the Vendée. The spirit behind their relations is illustrated by the following note which the French Prime Minister wrote within a few hours of the signing of the Armistice:

Premier Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, *November* 11, 1918, 9 A.M.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:

In this solemn moment of great events in which your noble country and its worthy chief have played so fine a rôle, I cannot restrain the desire to open my arms to you and press you against my heart.

Your sincere

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

APPENDIX

OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMENTARY ON THE FOURTEEN POINTS

October, 1918

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

[1] E. M. H. to C. S., April 7, 1928.

The purpose is clearly to prohibit treaties, sections of treaties or understandings that are secret, such as the Triple Alliance, etc.

The phrase 'openly arrived at' need not cause difficulty. In fact, the President explained to the Senate last winter that the phrase was not meant to exclude confidential diplomatic negotiations involving delicate matters. The intention is that nothing which occurs in the course of such confidential negotiations shall be binding unless it appears in the final covenant made public to the world.

The matter may perhaps be put this way: It is proposed that in the future every treaty be part of the public law of the world; and that every nation assume a certain obligation in regard to its enforcement. Obviously, nations cannot assume obligations in matters of which they are ignorant; and therefore any secret treaty tends to undermine the solidity of the whole structure of international covenants which it is proposed to erect.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

This proposition must be read in connection with No. XIV, which proposes a League of Nations. It refers to navigation under the three following conditions:

1. General peace:
2. A general war, entered into by the League of Nations for the purpose of enforcing international covenants;
3. Limited war; involving no breach of international covenants.

Under "1" (General peace) no serious dispute exists. There is implied freedom to come and go on the high seas.

No serious dispute exists as to the intention under "2" (a general war entered into by the League of Nations to enforce international covenants). Obviously such a war is conducted against an outlaw nation and complete non-intercourse with that nation is intended.

"3" (A limited war, involving no breach of international covenants) is the crux of the whole difficulty. The question is, what are to be the rights of neutral shipping and private property on the high seas during a war between a limited number of nations when that war involves no issue upon which the League of Nations cares to take sides. In other words, a war in which the League of Nations remains neutral. Clearly, it is the intention of the proposal that in such a war the rights of neutrals shall be maintained against the belligerents, the rights of both to be clearly and precisely defined in the law of nations.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

The proposal applies only to those nations which accept the responsibilities of membership in the League of Nations. It means the destruction of all special commercial agreements, each nation putting the trade

of every other nation in the League on the same basis, the most favored nation clause applying automatically to all members of the League of Nations.

Thus a nation could legally maintain a tariff or a special railroad rate or a port restriction against the whole world, or against all the signatory powers. It could maintain any kind of restriction which it chose against a nation not in the League. But it could not discriminate as between its partners in the League.

This clause naturally contemplates fair and equitable understanding as to the distribution of raw materials.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

"Domestic safety" clearly implies not only internal policing, but the protection of territory against invasion. The accumulation of armaments above this level would be a violation of the intention of the proposal.

What guarantees should be given and taken, or what are to be the standards of judgment have never been determined. It will be necessary to adopt the general principle and then institute some kind of international commission of investigation to prepare detailed projects for its execution.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

Some fear is expressed in France and England that this involves the reopening of all colonial questions. Obviously it is not so intended. It applies clearly to those colonial claims which have been created by the war. That means the German colonies and any other colonies which may come under international consideration as a result of the war.

The stipulation is that in the case of the German colonies the title is to be determined after the conclusion of the war by "impartial adjustment" based on certain principles. These are of two kinds: 1. "Equitable" claims: 2. The interests of the populations concerned.

What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Britain and Japan, the two chief heirs of the German colonial empire, that the colonies cannot be returned to Germany? Because she will use them as submarine bases, because she will arm the blacks, because she uses the colonies as bases of intrigue, because she oppresses the natives. What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Germany? That she needs access to tropical raw materials, that she needs a field for the expansion of her population, that under the principles of peace proposed, conquest gives her enemies no title to her colonies.

What are the "interests of the populations"? That they should not be militarized, that exploitation should be conducted on the principle of the open door, and under the strictest regulation as to labor conditions, profits and taxes, that a sanitary régime be maintained, that permanent im-

provements in the way of roads, etc., be made, that native organization and custom be respected, that the protecting authority be stable and experienced enough to thwart intrigue and corruption, that the protecting power have adequate resources in money and competent administrators to act successfully.

It would seem as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the interests of the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon all colonial powers.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest coöperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

The first question is whether Russian territory is synonymous with territory belonging to the former Russian Empire. This is clearly not so, because Proposition XIII stipulates an independent Poland, a proposal which excludes the territorial reëstablishment of the Empire. What is recognized as valid for the Poles will certainly have to be recognized for the Finns, the Lithuanians, the Letts, and perhaps also for the Ukrainians. Since the formulation of this condition, these subject nationalities have emerged, and there can be no doubt that they will have to be given an opportunity of free development.

The problem of these nationalities is complicated by two facts: 1. That they have conflicting claims: 2. That the evacuation called for in the proposal may be followed by Bolshevist revolutions in all of them.

The chief conflicts are (a) Between the Letts and Germans in Courland; (b) Between the Poles and the Lithuanians on the northeast; (c) Between the Poles and the White Ruthenians on the east; (d) Between the Poles and the Ukrainians on the southeast (and in Eastern Galicia). In this whole borderland the relation of the German Poles to the other nationalities is roughly speaking that of landlord to peasant. Therefore the evacuation of the territory, if it resulted in class war, would very probably also take the form of a conflict of nationalities. It is clearly to the interests of a good settlement that the real nation in each territory should be consulted rather than the ruling and possessing class.

This can mean nothing less than the recognition by the Peace Conference of a series of *de facto* Governments representing Finns, Esths, Lithuanians, Ukrainians. This primary act of recognition should be

conditional upon the calling of National Assemblies for the creation of *de jure* Governments, as soon as the Peace Conference has drawn frontiers for these new states. The frontiers should be drawn so far as possible on ethnic lines, but in every case the right of unhampered economic transit should be reserved. No dynastic ties with German or Austrian or Romanoff princes should be permitted, and every inducement should be given to encourage federal relations between these new states. Under Proposition III the economic sections of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk are abolished, but this Proposition should not be construed as forbidding a customs union, a monetary union, a railroad union, etc., of these states. Provision should also be made by which Great Russia can federate with these states on the same terms.

As for Great Russia and Siberia, the Peace Conference might well send a message asking for the creation of a government sufficiently representative to speak for these territories. It should be understood that economic rehabilitation is offered, provided a government carrying sufficient credentials can appear at the Peace Conference.

The Allies should offer this provisional government any form of assistance it may need. The possibility of extending this will exist when the Dardanelles are opened.

The essence of the Russian problem then in the immediate future would seem to be:

1. The recognition of Provisional Governments.
2. Assistance extended to and through these Governments.

The Caucasus should probably be treated as part of the problem of the Turkish Empire. No information exists justifying an opinion on the proper policy in regard to Mohammedan Russia — that is, briefly, Central Asia. It may well be that some power will have to be given a limited mandate to act as protector.

In any case the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest must be cancelled as palpably fraudulent. Provision must be made for the withdrawal of all German troops in Russia and the Peace Conference will have a clean slate on which to write a policy for all the Russian peoples.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

The only problem raised here is in the word 'restored.' Whether restoration is to be in kind, or how the amount of the indemnity is to be determined is a matter of detail, not of principle. The principle that should be established is that in the case of Belgium there exists no distinction between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' destruction. The initial act of invasion was illegitimate and therefore all the consequences of that act are of the same character. Among the consequences may be put the war debt of Belgium. The recognition of this principle would constitute 'the healing act' of which the President speaks.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

In regard to the restoration of French territory it might well be argued that the invasion of Northern France, being the result of the illegal act as regards Belgium, was in itself illegal. But the case is not perfect. As the world stood in 1914, war between France and Germany was not in itself a violation of international law, and great insistence should be put upon keeping the Belgian case distinct and symbolic. Thus Belgium might well (as indicated above) claim reimbursement not only for destruction but for the cost of carrying on the war. France could not claim payment, it would seem, for more than the damage done to her northeastern departments.

The status of Alsace-Lorraine was settled by the official statement issued a few days ago. It is to be restored completely to French sovereignty.

Attention is called to the strong current of French opinion which claims 'the boundaries of 1814' rather than of 1871. The territory claimed is the Valley of the Saar with its coal fields. No claim on grounds of nationality can be established, but the argument leans on the possibility of taking this territory in lieu of indemnity. It would seem to be a clear violation of the President's proposal.

Attention is called also to the fact that no reference is made to the status of Luxembourg. The best solution would seem to be a free choice by the people of Luxembourg themselves.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

This proposal is less than the Italian claim, less of course, than the territory allotted by the Treaty of London, less than the arrangement made between the Italian Government and the Jugo-Slav State.

In the region of Trent the Italians claim a strategic rather than an ethnic frontier. It should be noted in this connection that Italy and Germany will become neighbors if German Austria joins the German Empire. And if Italy obtains the best geographical frontier she will assume sovereignty over a large number of Germans. This is a violation of principle. But, it may be argued that by drawing a sharp line along the crest of the Alps, Italy's security will be enormously enhanced and the necessity of heavy armaments reduced. It might, therefore, be provided that Italy should have her claim in the Trentino, but that the northern part, inhabited by Germans, should be completely autonomous, and that the population should not be liable to military service in the Italian army. Italy could thus occupy the uninhabited Alpine peaks for military purposes, but would not govern the cultural life of the alien population to the south of her frontier.

The other problems of the frontier are questions between Italy and Jugo-Slavia, Italy and the Balkans, Italy and Greece.

The agreement reached with Jugo-Slavs may well be allowed to stand, although it should be insisted for the protection of the hinterland that both Trieste and Fiume be free ports. This is essential to Bohemia, German Austria, Hungary as well as to the prosperity of the cities themselves.

Italy appears in Balkan politics through her claim to a protectorate over Albania and the possession of Valona. There is no serious objection raised to this, although the terms of the protectorate need to be vigorously controlled. If Italy is protector of Albania, the local life of Albania should be guaranteed by the League of Nations.

A conflict with Greece appears through the Greek claim to Northern Epirus (or what is now Southern Albania). This would bring Greece closer to Valona than Italy desires. A second conflict with Greece occurs over the Ægean Islands of the Dodekanese, but it is understood that a solution favorable to Greece is being worked out.

(Italy's claims in Turkey belong to the problem of the Turkish Empire).

X. *The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.*

This proposition no longer holds. Instead we have to-day the following elements:

1. Czecho-Slovakia. Its territories include at least a million Germans, for whom some provision must be made.

The independence of Slovakia means the dismemberment of the northwestern counties of Hungary.

2. Galicia. Western Galicia is clearly Polish. Eastern Galicia is in large measure Ukrainian, (or Ruthenian,) and does not of right belong to Poland.

There also are several hundred thousand Ukrainians along the north and northeastern borders of Hungary, and in parts of Bukowina (which belonged to Austria).

3. German Austria. This territory should of right be permitted to join Germany, but there is strong objection in France because of the increase of population involved.

4. Jugo-Slavia. It faces the following problems:

a. Frontier questions with Italy in Istria and the Dalmatian Coast; with Rumania in the Banat.

b. An internal problem arises out of the refusal of the Croats to accept the domination of the Serbs of the Serbian Kingdom.

c. A problem of the Mohammedan Serbs of Bosnia who are said to be loyal to the Hapsburgs. They constitute a little less than one third of the population.

5. Transylvania. Will undoubtedly join Roumania, but provision must be made for the protection of the Magyars, Szeklers and Germans who constitute a large minority.

6. Hungary. Now independent, and very democratic in form, but governed by Magyars whose aim is to prevent the detachment of the territory of the nationalities on the fringe.

The United States is clearly committed to the programme of national unity and independence. It must stipulate, however, for the protection of national minorities, for freedom of access to the Adriatic and the Black Sea, and it supports a programme aiming at a Confederation of Southeastern Europe.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

This proposal is also altered by events. Serbia will appear as Jugo-Slavia with access to the Adriatic. Rumania will have acquired the Dobrudja, Bessarabia, and probably Transylvania. These two states will have 11 or 12 million inhabitants and will be far greater and stronger than Bulgaria.

Bulgaria should clearly have her frontier in the Southern Dobrudja as it stood before the Second Balkan War. She should also have Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line, and perhaps even to the Midia-Rodosto line.

Macedonia should be allotted after an impartial investigation. The line which might be taken as a basis of investigation is the southern line of the 'contested zone' agreed upon by Serbia and Bulgaria before the First Balkan War.

Albania could be under a protectorate, no doubt of Italy, and its frontiers in the north might be essentially those of the London Conference.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

The same difficulty arises here, as in the case of Austria-Hungary, concerning the word 'autonomous.'

It is clear that the Straits and Constantinople, while they may remain nominally Turkish, should be under international control. This control may be collective or be in the hands of one Power as mandatory of the League.

Anatolia should be reserved for the Turks. The coast lands, where Greeks predominate, should be under special international control, perhaps with Greece as mandatory.

Armenia must be given a port on the Mediterranean, and a protecting power established. France may claim it, but the Armenians would prefer Great Britain.

Syria has already been allotted to France by agreement with Great Britain.

Britain is clearly the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia.

A general code of guarantees binding on all mandatories in Asia Minor should be written into the Treaty of Peace.

This should contain provisions for minorities and the open door. The trunk railroad lines should be internationalized.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

The chief problem is whether Poland is to obtain territory west of the Vistula which would cut off the Germans of East Prussia from the Empire, or whether Danzig can be made a free port and the Vistula internationalized.

On the east, Poland should receive no territory in which Lithuanians or Ukrainians predominate.

If Posen and Silesia go to Poland rigid protection must be afforded the minorities of Germans and Jews living there, as well as in other parts of the Polish state.

The principle on which frontiers will be delimited is contained in the President's words 'indisputably.' This may imply the taking of an impartial census before frontiers are marked.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

The question of a League of Nations as the primary essential of a permanent peace has been so clearly presented by President Wilson in his speech of September 27, 1918, that no further elucidation is required. It is the foundation of the whole diplomatic structure of a permanent peace.

CHAPTER VII

WAITING FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE

I am trying to frighten those who are endeavoring to postpone the Congress. I am telling them the people will begin to murmur.

Colonel House's Diary, November 18, 1918

I

THE end of the fighting on the Western Front came with an abruptness that caught both Governments and peoples unprepared. All the brains, energies, and emotions of the Entente Allies had been connected up with a war-making machine, the wheels of which continued to revolve actively even after the Armistice had officially turned off the switch. As much genius was necessary to overcome the momentum of war as had been applied to maintaining it at high speed. So great had been the destruction and industrial dislocation occasioned by four years and more of fighting, that even to keep Europe alive would tax the capacity of the political leaders. It was in the midst of this crisis that the problems of permanent peace, as distinguished from the mere cessation of warfare, must be studied and solved.

For the drafting of the principal terms of peace the Governments were not entirely unready, since in France, Great Britain, and the United States expert committees had long been at work evaluating and reducing to concrete form the war aims of the victorious belligerents. Colonel House's Inquiry, even before the Armistice had been signed, provided the basis for a detailed scheme, in which definite solutions were propounded for the various territorial and economic problems involved in the peace settlement. But to induce an atmosphere of tranquillity necessary to agreement upon the final treaties, and to repress the threatening tide of anarchy which might make of them a dead letter, was a more difficult task; it was of vital importance, since the success of the

Peace Conference was dependent quite as much upon the existence of a pacific state of mind as upon the character of the treaties. Treaties do not create peace; they reflect it.

Such a thought was in the mind of Colonel House when immediately upon the signing of the Armistice he advocated striking off a preliminary treaty, without loss of time. An immediate treaty, he argued, would do more than anything else to end the period of uncertainty inaugurated by the Armistice, which if it continued would necessarily foster anarchy in the defeated countries and swell the wave of nationalist aspirations that became apparent among the victors. The main lines of such a peace were already outlined. Its military and naval terms were contained in the Armistice Convention, the principle of reparation to be included in the treaty was already determined upon and expressed in the pre-Armistice agreement.[1] It would be equally possible to draft immediately the territorial terms, so far as they might be necessary to a preliminary treaty; the Fourteen Points had been accepted as the basis for the peace and the Allies had received an interpretation of these points that was approved by President Wilson.[2] 'Therefore,' as House wrote later, 'the skeleton of the treaty was made before the President came to Paris.'

Nearly ten years later Colonel House's mind reverted to the opportunity which he believed had been lost in not attempting a preliminary treaty without delay. His considered reflections are contained in a memorandum he wrote on April 9, 1928:

House Memorandum upon a Preliminary Treaty

'The years that have passed since June, 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles was laid upon the table for signature,

[1] 'Compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.'

[2] *Supra*, p. 153.

leave me with an unchanged mind regarding the desirability of making a quick preliminary peace as soon after the Armistice as was possible. That would have been the customary method, and there never were more compelling reasons for following this procedure. The intensity of the war, and the dislocation of regular human activities resulting from the war, made it vital to bring about something approaching normal conditions at once.

'As to the armies and navies of the Central Powers, the terms of the Armistice left little to add for a preliminary peace. A fixed sum should have been named for reparations, a just sum and one possible to pay. The boundaries might have been drawn with a broad sweep, with provision for later adjustments. A general but specific commitment regarding an association of nations for the maintenance of peace should have been made; and then adjournment.

'The permanent peace could have been made at leisure. This would have followed the procedure of the Germans in the War of 1870.

'In retrospect, it seems that this course might have saved the *débâcle* of the Continental European currencies. It might have avoided the long years of delay in the adjustment of reparations, a delay that had tragic consequences. Countless lives among the young and aged in the Central Empires were needlessly sacrificed; the wretched poverty brought by the debased currency upon those with fixed incomes might have been averted.

'In all probability, the United States would have ratified both treaties, surely the first, and such a commitment would have all but ensured ratification of the second. President Wilson probably would not have continued in Paris after the preliminary peace was made, and he would thus have been spared the heart-breaking task laid upon him from January to June. He also would have been spared the cruel attacks made upon him and the Treaty by the United States Senate,

attacks which broke his health and left him but the shadow of his former self, a tragedy which has but few parallels in history.

'It has been said that a preliminary treaty would have meant the sacrifice of the League of Nations; that with peace established, some of the Allies would have been reluctant to accept such a covenant as was made. I do not share this opinion. The conditions under which a covenant for the League would have been made, as a part of the permanent treaty, would have been largely the same as those under which it was made in the Treaty of Versailles. But in addition, both the Allies and the Central Powers would have been already pledged to it in the preliminary treaty. President Wilson would have been able to exercise at least as much pressure and influence as he did in the making of the Treaty of Versailles. With a preliminary treaty ratified, he would in fact have been in even a stronger position than he was during the formation of that Treaty.

'It must not be forgotten, that during the entire year of 1919 and in the early months of 1920, the sentiment in America and in the Senate itself was overwhelmingly in favor of an association of nations. Witness the resolution passed in the Massachusetts Republican Convention, Senator Lodge's own State; and also the resolutions passed by many associations of national scope throughout the United States. Witness also the vote in the Senate upon the ratification of the Treaty. If President Wilson had agreed to the reservations, and if a full vote had been registered, the result would have been eighty-two in favor of ratification and fourteen against, an overwhelming majority for ratification.

'The opportunity to make a preliminary treaty was lost when the British and French sought the impossible, in their demand that Germany should pay the entire cost of the war. Such a demand seemed futile then and seems more so in retrospect. But it delayed the making of the Treaty, and in the

end a compromise was reached, in effect that Germany should sign a blank check and that the Reparations Commission should fill it in later. This might have been workable had the United States promptly ratified the Treaty, but, alas, that was not to be. Instead there was the long-drawn-out struggle between President Wilson and the Senate, with failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles as the outcome.

'Meanwhile conditions in Europe became steadily worse, and are only now beginning to show marked improvement. Not only should there have been an early preliminary treaty of peace, but the permanent treaty should have been one of conciliation, rather than one of revenge. The war itself was like no other in its intensity, and in its fierce destruction of human life and property. The peace, in turn, should have taken a new path leading to better international understandings. Every one should have yielded a little in order to leave in the hearts of the defeated no sense of injustice. It was an opportunity for sacrifice — sacrifice which might not have been appreciated at the time by those in whose behalf it was made, but which surely later would have garnered rich returns for all. The peace Great Britain granted the Boers might have served as a model. This peace will ever stand as a noble monument to those responsible for its making.

'For these and for other reasons, which might be multiplied, I was in favor of a preliminary peace in the autumn of 1918; and I feel that recent history has justified those of us who tried to bring it about.'

April 9, 1928.

Whether or not a preliminary treaty was to be drafted, and this possibility continued to be discussed and even assumed as a probability until the late spring of 1919, it was of importance that there should be no delay in the assembling of the Peace Conference after the Armistice. The responsibility for the delay that took place has very generally been laid

upon the shoulders of President Wilson, and it is true that because of his determination to head the American Commission himself and his desire to address Congress on December 2, the representatives of the United States could not be in Paris before the middle of December. On the other hand, it is obvious that the European Premiers were not sorry for the delay, and even after Wilson arrived in Europe they allowed the weeks to pass before proceeding to call the Peace Conference. They were interested in settling domestic affairs, and both in France and England the Governments were compelled to face a general election. Perhaps they were anxious also to let the political situation in Germany become crystallized before they proceeded to frame the German treaty.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 15, 1918

I send for your information the following telegram from Clemenceau to Lloyd George. 'The coming of President Wilson naturally changes some of our plans in preparing for the Conference. It seems to me that we cannot begin the work before the President arrives. We ought to be unanimous in this respect. Besides, I think it is not a bad idea to let the German Revolution settle down for a while in order that we may know, before proceeding, what we have before us. I would suggest to you that we draw up some preparatory memoranda either in London or in Paris. I am ready to accept all your suggestions in this respect. If we should proceed thus, the President on arriving could make his observations without any delay and the task would find itself advanced. I expect to see Signor Sonnino this afternoon. I do not doubt that he will assent. . . .'

EDWARD HOUSE

Wilson himself did not feel the need of haste in drafting preliminary treaties. On Armistice Day he sent to House a cable of which the following is a paraphrase:

With reference to the Peace Conference, will it not be wise and necessary to postpone it until there are governments in Germany and Austria-Hungary which can enter into binding agreements? I feel obliged not to leave before delivering my annual message to the Congress on the second of December. I could leave immediately after that and hope that it will be possible to fix the date of the meeting accordingly.[1]

House accepted the necessity of delay until the President's arrival, but obviously became impatient as he observed the attention of the Conference leaders being drawn to domestic affairs. 'There is a tendency to delay not only the preliminary conferences,' he cabled Wilson on November 16, 'but the final one. This I think is unfortunate. The sooner you announce your purpose of sailing December 3 the better. Until then no plans can be made.'

'I am trying,' wrote House in his diary on November 18, 'to frighten those who are endeavoring to postpone the Congress. I am telling them the people will soon begin to murmur. Sonnino agreed with me, and I asked him to write me a letter and express his fears as to what will result in Italy unless we come to a quick conclusion.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 20, 1918

Various circumstances are delaying an agreement respecting important points connected with the constitution of the Peace Conference and the procedure to be followed therein.

[1] Wilson to House, November 11, 1918.

George and the other members of the English Government are completely engrossed in the pending elections and will in all probability be unwilling, until the elections are over on December 14, to decide definitely how many delegates they will wish to nominate and who those delegates will be. If George is defeated, of course considerable confusion respecting this matter will result. If George wins, he will probably make some radical changes in his Cabinet which may affect the make-up of the English delegation at the Peace Conference. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *December* 4, 1918

I have just heard from Mr. Balfour that December 16th would be perfectly convenient as far as the British Government are concerned for the holding of the first meeting of the Interallied Conference. Balfour adds that Clemenceau expressed the view that December 16th might prove too early. Balfour suggested that it may be wise to allow a few days for informal discussions before the actual meeting of the Conference.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*December* 5, 1918: [Conference of Clemenceau and House.] We spoke of the President's arrival, of the conferences, and when we were to commence. He thought it would be impossible to begin the actual conferences of the Allies before the first of January and wanted to know if we would consent to so late a date, and explained why it was impossible to have them sooner. I consented provided it was the first week in January and there would be no further postponement or delay after they once began. He thought it not improbable that it would be a year before the peace treaty was signed.'

II

Of equal importance with the date of opening the Conference, and of far more interest to the public then or since, was the question of President Wilson's coming to Paris as an American delegate. The President himself took it for granted that he would head the American Peace Commission and sit in the Conference. In fact, on November 14 he cabled to House: 'I assume also that I shall be selected to preside.' There were certainly strong arguments in favor of his coming. No one had expounded the principle of the new international order with such eloquence and cogency. He was recognized as the prophet of liberal ideals throughout the world, and many believed that he ought to head the fight for those ideals in person at the Conference.

The political chiefs of the Entente, however, did not accept with enthusiasm the idea of President Wilson sitting in with them as a peace delegate. Not without some embarrassment they let Colonel House see their feeling, and with equal embarrassment he transmitted his impression to the President. The Premiers may have feared his influence with the European liberals; possibly they believed that he would prove in negotiation too doctrinaire and austere in his idealism. The basic objection which they presented to House was that he ranked rather with a sovereign than with the Prime Ministers; they would gladly receive him with the honors due a sovereign, but it was not fitting that he should himself sit in the Conference. In the telegram from Clemenceau to Lloyd George which the former had sent to Colonel House and which he forwarded to the President on November 15, the French Prime Minister declared: 'A particularly serious question is to know whether the President intends to take part in the Conference. I ought not to hide from you that in my opinion this seems to be neither desirable nor possible. Since he is chief of state he is consequently not on the same line as ourselves. To admit one

chief of state without admitting all seems to me an impossibility.'

Many of President Wilson's warmest supporters in Europe questioned the advisability of his coming, for various reasons. The strongest objection raised was that by injecting himself into the mêlée he would lose the moral authority which he had exerted. To preserve his prestige Wilson must remain above the diplomatic struggle, safe upon the pedestal which the admiring peoples of Europe, Allies as well as enemies, had erected. This argument was strongly presented to House by Frank Cobb, an astute reader of public opinion and a sincere Wilsonian supporter. The wisdom of his judgment was reenforced by the opportunity he had been given to watch at close range the European statesmen in the process of negotiating the Armistice.

Confidential Memorandum from Mr. Cobb for Colonel House

PARIS, *November* 4, 1918

The moment President Wilson sits at the council table with these Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries he has lost all the power that comes from distance and detachment. Instead of remaining the great arbiter of human freedom he becomes merely a negotiator dealing with other negotiators. He is simply one vote in a Peace Conference bound either to abide by the will of the majority or disrupt its proceedings under circumstances which, having come to a climax in secret, can never be clearly explained to the public. Any public protest to which the President gave utterance would thus be only the complaint of a thwarted and disappointed negotiator.

The President's extraordinary facility of statement would be lost in a conference. Anything he said to his associates would be made mediocre and commonplace by the transla-

tors, and could carry none of the weight of his formal utterances.

Furthermore, personal contact between the President and these Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries, who are already jealous of his power and resentful of his leadership in Europe, must inevitably develop new friction and endless controversy. They would miss no opportunity to harass him and wear him down. They would seek to play him off one against the other, a game in which they are marvelously adroit, since it has been the game of European diplomacy since the days of Metternich and Talleyrand. The President cannot afford to play it.

In Washington, President Wilson has the ear of the whole world. It is a commanding position, the position of a court of last resort, of world democracy. He cannot afford to be maneuvered into the position of an advocate engaged in personal dispute and altercation with other advocates around a council table. In Washington, he is a dispassionate judge whose mind is unclouded by all these petty personal circumstances of a conference. If his representatives are balked by the representatives of the other Powers in matters which he regards as vital to the lasting peace of the world, he can go before Congress and appeal to the conscience and hope of mankind. He can do this over the head of any Peace Conference. This is a mighty weapon, but if the President were to participate personally in the proceedings, it would be a broken stick.

The President, if he is to win this great battle for human freedom, must fight on his own ground and his own ground is Washington. Diplomatic Europe is all enemy soil for him. He cannot make a successful appeal to the people of the world here. The official surroundings are all unfavorable. The means of minimizing its effect are all under the control of those who are opposed to him. One of his strongest weapons in his conflict is the very mystery and uncertainty that attach to him while he remains in Washington.

When we left New York, I believed that it was not only desirable but necessary for President Wilson to come to Europe. Since our arrival here, my opinion is changed completely, and I am wholly convinced now that the success of the Peace Conference from the American point of view depends on the President's directing the proceedings from Washington where he can be free from immediate personal contact with European negotiators and European diplomacy.

FRANK I. COBB

Colonel House explained to the President that precedent and courtesy would prevent his being chosen President of the Conference, if it were held in France. He also let him know of the prevailing feeling in Europe that he ought not to come as a delegate, softening what he knew would be unwelcome news by the intimation that he could settle the main issues in preliminary informal conferences. It was difficult if not impossible for House to urge the President to stay away from the Conference, since such advice would be tantamount to suggesting that he himself conduct the negotiations.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 14, 1918

If the Peace Congress assembles in France, Clemenceau will be presiding officer. If a neutral country had been chosen, you would have been asked to preside.

Americans here whose opinions are of value are practically unanimous in the belief that it would be unwise for you to sit in the Peace Conference. They fear that it would involve a loss of dignity and your commanding position.

Clemenceau has just told me that he hopes you will not sit in the Congress because no head of a State should sit there. The same feeling prevails in England. Cobb cables

that Reading and Wiseman voice the same view. Every one wants you to come over to take part in the preliminary conference. It is at these meetings that peace terms will be worked out and determined just as the informal conferences determined the German and Austrian Armistices. It is of vital importance, I think, for you to come as soon as possible, for everything is being held in abeyance.

John Davis, who is here, gives as his offhand opinion that you need not be present at the opening of Congress. However, I am planning for your sailing December 3, but hoping you will consider it possible to come at an earlier date. Clemenceau believes that the preliminary discussions need not take more than three weeks. The Peace Conference he believes may take as long as four months. . . .

In announcing your departure I think it important that you should not state that you will sit at the Peace Conference. That can be determined after you get there. . . . The French, English, and Italian Prime Ministers will head their delegations.

EDWARD HOUSE

President Wilson was by no means pleased with this telegram: It upsets every plan we had made, he cabled in reply. I am thrown into complete confusion by the change of programme. He added that the suggestion that he be received with the honors due the chief of State, but not sit as a delegate, 'seems to me a way of pocketing me.' The paraphrase of the essential portions of the President's cable is as follows:

I infer that the French and British leaders desire to exclude me from the Conference for fear I might there lead the weaker nations against them. . . . I play the same part in our Government as the Prime Ministers play in theirs. The fact that I am head of the State is of no practical importance. I

object very strongly to the fact that dignity must prevent our obtaining the results we have set our hearts on. It is universally expected and generally desired here that I should attend the Conference, but I believe that no one would wish me to sit by and try to steer from the outside. . . . I hope you will be very shy of their advice and give me your own independent judgment after reconsideration.[1]

The cable to House was characteristic of the President's reaction to unpleasant counsel. Wilson was not in the least impelled by motives of vanity in his desire to attend the Conference in person. He looked forward to it, however, as an intellectual treat which he did not want to miss; his main interest all through his life had been centered on problems of political theory and practice, and this gathering would bring together the outstanding minds of the world in the field of politics. Furthermore, he was sincerely convinced that his presence at the Conference was necessary to the victory of liberal forces. House recognized that the President's decision was final, and set about to overcome the objections of Clemenceau, at the same time repeating in a cable to Wilson his own opinion: 'My judgment is that you should . . . determine upon your arrival what share it is wise for you to take in the proceedings.' He reassured the President as to the reactionary conspiracy which Wilson evidently attributed to the European leaders: 'As far as I can see,' he cabled, 'all the Powers are trying to work with us rather than with one another. Their disagreements are sharp and constant.'

The President followed House's advice to the extent of issuing the following noncommittal announcement, which he cabled to House and in which he avoided stating that he would himself sit as a delegate:

[1] Wilson to House, November 16, 1918.

'The President will sail for France immediately after the opening of the regular session of Congress for the purpose of taking part in the discussions and the settlement of the main features of the Treaty of Peace.

'It is not likely that it will be possible for him to remain throughout the sessions of the formal Peace Conference, but his presence at the outset is necessary in order to obviate the manifest disadvantages of discussion by cable in determining the greater outlines of the final Treaty about which he must necessarily be consulted. He will, of course, be accompanied by delegates who will sit as the representatives of the United States throughout the Conference. The names of the delegates and the date of the meeting will be presently announced.' [1]

The President concluded his cable of November 19 to House with the assurance that 'if the French Prime Minister is uneasy about the presidency of the Conference, I will be glad to propose that he preside.' House spent some effort in explaining to Clemenceau the incorrectness of the prevailing belief that the President was stiff and obstinate in personal relations.

'*November* 30, 1918: Clemenceau came in the afternoon,' wrote House. 'I hoped he would not pay any attention to what he heard about the President being dictatorial, arbitrary, or hard to get along with. I assured him that . . . I had always found him more amenable to advice than any public man with whom I had been thrown in close contact.

'*December* 5, 1918: Clemenceau wondered again whether the President would sit with the other delegates. That, I told him, was a matter the President would determine after he reached France; the President was a man of sense and could be relied upon to do the sensible thing. Clemenceau

[1] Wilson to House, November 19, 1918.

said he would be willing to go to the President's house in the mornings, just as they came here to me during the Armistice proceedings, and then have more formal meetings of the delegates at the Quai d'Orsay to endorse what was done at the morning meetings. The President might be willing to accept this compromise. He said it would not do for the President to offer resolutions suggesting that he (Clemenceau) should preside at the meetings, for it went without saying that the head of the Government where the Conference was held should preside. He said this apropos of the President's suggestion, which I transmitted to him through Frazier some time ago.

'*December* 17, 1918: I had a talk with the Japanese Ambassador and rather disturbed his usual equilibrium by asking whether he thought the President should sit in the Peace Conference. I was amused at his efforts to give a non-compromising reply.'

Whatever the factors that may have weighed with him, Clemenceau finally changed his mind regarding the desirability of Wilson's sitting in the Peace Conference as a delegate. He may have felt that it would be easier to deal directly with the President than through an agent and that Wilson's opinions would have less influence if he were in Paris than if he were in Washington. It is more likely that he was beginning to realize the antagonism between French and British policy, which became apparent the moment the Armistice was signed, and that he hoped to secure Wilson's sympathy for French aspirations in any conflict with the British.

By the time of Wilson's arrival in Paris, Clemenceau was ready to tell House that he entirely approved the President's sitting in the Conference as a delegate. 'It might be,' wrote House in his diary, 'that he believes it will pull Wilson down from his high pedestal.'

III

Discussions regarding the place of the Peace Conference were brief and the force of circumstances, supported, curiously enough, by Wilson's fear of enemy and Bolshevik influence in Switzerland, led to the choice of France. It was ultimately agreed that each of the Principal Powers should be represented by five delegates, although at one time House advocated seven as a means of giving added representation to the Republican Party at the Conference.

'*October* 29, 1918: [Conference of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and House.] I asked Clemenceau what place he had in mind for the Peace Conference. He said, "Versailles." Lloyd George replied that he and I had agreed upon Geneva. Clemenceau did not argue the matter and I suggested that it might be postponed for further discussion. In leaving, Lloyd George agreed that it was best not to have the Peace Conference upon French soil but in a neutral country. Before I left Washington, the President agreed that Lausanne would be the best place for the Conference because of its ample hotel and other accommodations and the fact that the people are pro-Ally in their sympathies. When I reached Paris I came to the conclusion that Geneva would be the better place. Orlando promised to favor any place I thought best.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 6, 1918

When Lloyd George was here I spoke to him and Clemenceau about the number of delegates each country should have at the Peace Conference. Clemenceau remarked that half of France wanted to be present, and Lloyd George replied that he was lucky, for all England wished to attend. Lloyd George said he would be compelled to appoint among others a man from the Colonies and a Labor representative.

We agreed to postpone final discussion until they had time to think about it further.

I suggested that England, France, Italy, and the United States should each have five places at the table, the other belligerent Powers to have representatives varying from one to three places according to their relative importance. This seemed to meet with their approval. I had in mind that Germany should also have five places.[1]

It is essential that the sittings should contain only a limited number, for we have found it difficult to transact business satisfactorily at Versailles, and it was necessary for the Prime Ministers to meet in advance in order that business might be facilitated.

The smaller countries like Belgium, Serbia, and Greece have been quite contented to have one place each at the Versailles sittings. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

On November 8, Wilson cabled House urging Versailles as the best place for the Peace Conference. 'Friendly influences and authorities' were in control there, he wrote, while Switzerland was 'saturated with every poisonous element and open to every hostile influence.' [2]

House was disappointed, but at once set to work to carry out Wilson's wishes. At least the French would be pleased. He wrote as follows in his diary:

'*November* 8, 1918: The President seems to have turned from his desire to have the Peace Conference held in Switzerland. . . . The Conference should be held in a neutral country. It will be difficult enough at best to make a just peace, and it will be almost impossible to do so while sitting in the atmosphere of a belligerent capital. It might turn out well

[1] Wilson cabled back on November 7, approving House's suggestion.
[2] Wilson to House, November 8, 1918.

and yet again it might be a tragedy. I shall take the matter up with Clemenceau to-morrow morning at 10.30.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 9, 1918

At a conference with Clemenceau this morning I stated that the United States was inclined to favor Versailles as the meeting-place for the Peace Conference. He assured me that if it was finally determined to have the Conference at Versailles all possible facilities would be extended to the United States representatives, such as living accommodations and communication service. He begged me not to ask him for any particular thing, but to rest assured that anything we wanted would be made available to us. He said that he would prefer to have the Conference almost any place than in Geneva, even going so far as to say that he would prefer London or Washington if it was not possible to agree on Versailles. No final decision can be reached until I have had an opportunity to communicate with both George and Orlando, inasmuch as before these gentlemen left Paris we had tentatively agreed on Geneva. Orlando stated, however, that any place the United States was in favor of would be satisfactory to Italy. As soon as the matter is agreed upon I shall take the necessary steps to secure appropriate accommodations.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*November* 10, 1918: I induced Northcliffe . . . to have a leading editorial in the *Times* to-morrow, the tone of which will be that it goes without saying that it [the Peace Conference] must be held in Paris.' [1]

[1] The article in question was published as a news despatch from Paris, in the London *Times* of November 11, as follows:

'The imminence of the Peace Conference has led to a general consideration of the question as to where the meeting can best be held.

'Geneva has been discussed as being the only neutral town which is

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 20, 1918

Lord Derby has just sent word to me that he has heard from Mr. Balfour that the British Government does not feel that it is bound to consider Versailles as the place finally decided upon for the Peace Conference. They feel that this is a question which must be finally decided by the Interallied Conference. Mr. Balfour points out, however, that after the various experts have arrived in Paris and the organization set up there, it will be most difficult to change the meeting-place of the final conference. Lord Derby believes that the British Government has, however, definitely accepted the proposal that the Interallied Conference should be held in Paris. Lord Derby states that he is doing his best to hurry the French Government into the taking over of the necessary accommodations for the staff of the British Government. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

possible for such a conference, but it is felt that the drawbacks to a meeting in any neutral country are too great to be ignored. The three great Allied capitals, Washington, London, and Paris, naturally come next in order of priority. London and, in still greater degree, Washington are inconvenient owing to the sea journey and consequent delay, while Paris, and particularly Versailles, seem to offer the best accommodation for a great peace conference which, in addition to a naturally very large Mission, would attract a great many people connected with it in varying degree.

'There exist, not only in Paris but also in the immediate neighbourhood at Versailles, vast public buildings, conveniently large private houses and hotels in which those concerned in the Peace deliberations could find housing. Quite apart from material questions, there are moral and symbolical factors which must be considered in the selection of a meeting-place. That it should be held in France would be a fine tribute by the Allied world to the special sufferings and heroism of the French.

'With the French army arriving, accompanied by the American army, at Sedan, France has already begun to remove the stain of 1870. The signature to the Peace conditions in the great *Galerie des Glaces*, where the now fallen German Empire once so insolently proclaimed Peace in 1871, would complete the most symbolical cleansing in European history. American sentiment is favourable towards this idea. It was at Paris that the Treaty of 1873, establishing American independence, was signed.'

It was generally agreed that the preliminary conference should be held in Paris, and without further discussion Versailles was naturally chosen as the place for the formal conference to which the Germans would be admitted.

The final decision that the Principal Powers should each be represented by five delegates still left it open to President Wilson to appoint two outstanding members of the Republican Party. He had discussed the matter on various occasions with House before the latter left to take part in the Armistice conferences. House had urged the appointment of Root or Taft, or both; but the President had expressed no enthusiasm. As late as November 14, his cables to House indicated that he had not yet decided upon the personnel of the Commission. As finally selected, the choices made by Wilson showed an obvious disregard for the exigencies of party politics, which might prove to be of dangerous importance when it came to the ratification of the Treaty. The November elections had gone so far in favor of the Republicans that they would control the Senate and its Foreign Relations Committee in the approaching session. But the President did not include in the Peace Commission either a representative of the Senate or any one of the Republican leaders. Besides himself, Wilson appointed Secretary Lansing, Colonel House, General Bliss, and Mr. Henry White, whose diplomatic experience in Europe had been extensive but who had no active political affiliations.

Such a disregard of political factors was a courting of difficulty. Attorney-General Gregory, on whose personal judgment Wilson placed great reliance and to whom he had, two years before, offered a position on the Supreme Bench,[1] discussed the problem frankly with the President. He

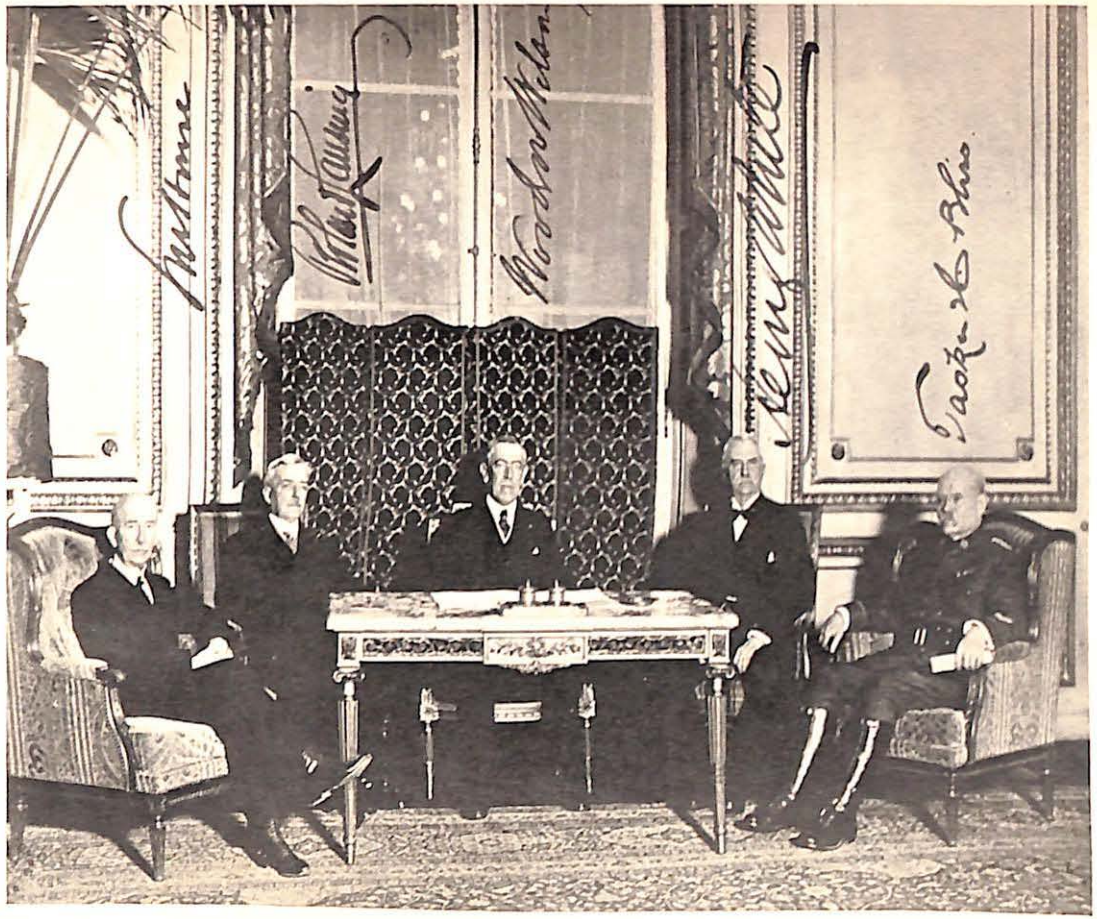
[1] President Wilson invited Mr. Gregory to become a Justice of the Supreme Court in the early summer of 1916, after the resignation of Mr. Hughes. Mr. Gregory felt compelled to decline, because of his deafness, in spite of the President's insistence.

believed that Wilson's letter previous to the election, in which he asked for the return of a Democratic Congress, had been a tactical error largely responsible for Republican victory. It was all the more important that the Republican Party and, if possible, the Senate should be adequately represented on the Peace Commission. Writing six years later, Mr. Gregory recalls the political circumstances of the moment:

Gregory Memorandum

'. . . The first mistake was the issuance of the letter in the autumn of 1918, a few days before the Armistice, urging the electors to vote for Democratic candidates *only*, on the ground that he [Wilson] should have a Democratic Congress to assist in carrying out his policies. The letter was not only a political mistake, but it was utterly un-Wilsonian. It should be remembered that in 1912 the combined vote for Taft and Roosevelt was largely more than that for Wilson; that by 1916 Wilson had converted a minority party into a majority party, and that this had been accomplished by rallying to his standard a host of voters who were ordinarily Independents and Progressive Republicans. The war was drawing to a successful close and during its continuance thousands of Republicans and Independents had been working under Mr. Wilson's leadership and sacrificing their private interests and forgetting their political affiliations; many had served without the slightest compensation. There were scores of Republicans in the Senate and House who had voted consistently for the President's policies and held up his hands during the struggle, at a time when many of his own party were doing their best to thwart him. Loyal Republicans and disloyal Democrats were candidates for re-election.

'It was claimed by the political opponents of Mr. Wilson that the letter stigmatized every one who was not a member



THE AMERICAN COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATE PEACE

of the Democratic Party, and it immediately raised an electoral issue and gave an opportunity to the Republicans which up to then had been lacking. Previously they had no fight in them, and indeed could not afford to attack Administration measures which the best of them had supported. Now they had some reason to complain of a document which injected a partisan issue at a moment when hosts of them could well claim that they had forgotten everything in order to win the war. Without this issue the Democrats would have carried the election easily, on the basis of Wilson's prestige and the fact that the war had been won. I am sure that no member of the Cabinet saw this letter before its publication. The Republicans rallied to a man, many Independents deserted the Democratic ranks and the election gave the Republicans a majority in both Senate and House. But for this result and the feeling engendered by the letter Mr. Wilson would have been able to control the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate, and the Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations could have been put through. I have no personal knowledge as to how this letter came to be written. Some supposed that Burleson advised it, for the President consulted more with him regarding matters of a political nature than he did with any of us. But Burleson has told me that, while he knew the President was considering publishing a letter, he was not consulted in regard to the text of the one given to the press. . . . I believe that Mr. Wilson signed this letter in a moment of extreme weariness, for these were harrowing times, at the end of a long day when his nerves were taut and his intellectual sentinels were not on the lookout for danger. I repeat that the letter is thoroughly un-Wilsonian.[1]

'The second mistake was made in the selection of the Peace Commissioners. I have always thought that it was best for the President to go to Paris. It is footless to specu-

[1] For House's opinion of Wilson's letter. see above, p. 68.

of the Democratic Party, and it immediately raised an electoral issue and gave an opportunity to the Republicans which up to then had been lacking. Previously they had no fight in them, and indeed could not afford to attack Administration measures which the best of them had supported. Now they had some reason to complain of a document which injected a partisan issue at a moment when hosts of them could well claim that they had forgotten everything in order to win the war. Without this issue the Democrats would have carried the election easily, on the basis of Wilson's prestige and the fact that the war had been won. I am sure that no member of the Cabinet saw this letter before its publication. The Republicans rallied to a man, many Independents deserted the Democratic ranks and the election gave the Republicans a majority in both Senate and House. But for this result and the feeling engendered by the letter Mr. Wilson would have been able to control the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate, and the Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations could have been put through. I have no personal knowledge as to how this letter came to be written. Some supposed that Burleson advised it, for the President consulted more with him regarding matters of a political nature than he did with any of us. But Burleson has told me that, while he knew the President was considering publishing a letter, he was not consulted in regard to the text of the one given to the press. . . . I believe that Mr. Wilson signed this letter in a moment of extreme weariness, for these were harrowing times, at the end of a long day when his nerves were taut and his intellectual sentinels were not on the lookout for danger. I repeat that the letter is thoroughly un-Wilsonian.[1]

'The second mistake was made in the selection of the Peace Commissioners. I have always thought that it was best for the President to go to Paris. It is footless to specu-

[1] For House's opinion of Wilson's letter. see above, p. 68.

late now as to what might have happened if he had not gone. . . . Just before the names of the Commissioners were announced, but after it was known that there would be five, I asked for a special appointment.

'I began by asking the President whether he had decided to appoint any members of the Senate to the Peace Commission. He said he had decided not to do so — that the Senate was an independent body and that it did not seem fair to him to influence its free judgment of diplomatic negotiations by appointing Senators who would take part in the negotiations and then act upon them as judges. I said, "In that case, Mr. President, our interview will be considerably shortened." I had in mind to suggest two Republican members of the Senate — Knute Nelson, that grand old man from Minnesota, and Knox of Pennsylvania. The appointment of those two men would have guaranteed the ratification of the Treaty; but I recognized the justice of his argument that it would not be fair to put Senators on the Commission.

'I then said to him, "Mr. President, I have four names to suggest for the Peace Commission: three Republicans and an Independent. The choice of any two of these men will absolutely assure the approval of the Senate to whatever Treaty you bring back and will make impossible any organized opposition. These men agree in sum with your policies, they would be of valuable assistance and would not obstruct. The effect upon the country and the Republican Party would be of the utmost value. They are, Root, Taft, Governor McCall of Massachusetts, and Mr. Eliot." I could see that he drew back a little bit from the suggestion. Governor McCall he thought ought not to be named because he had been publishing letters approving Wilson's policies, and the President felt that his appointment might be considered as a direct reward; he thought that in all other respects the selection would be a happy one; I strongly urged that Governor McCall's well-known views constituted the best of

reasons why he should be selected and insisted that the appointment would arouse no proper criticism.

'Why he did not name any of these men I cannot tell; there was in him no personal feeling against any one of them. Taft and Root had both approved the League of Nations; he was later to utilize their advice, and he had a high opinion of both. For Governor McCall he had a feeling akin to affection, and he had the highest respect for President Eliot. The men that he appointed to the Commission, with the exception of Colonel House, were of little value in dealing with the League of Nations problem. Mr. Henry White, delightful gentleman that he is, . . . was named as a Republican, but his appointment merely angered the Republican Party, for they said — if he was going to name a Republican why didn't he choose an active, full-blooded one? The selection of General Bliss was ideal in so far as military problems were involved. Secretary Lansing and the President disagreed on vital points and coöperation between them became impossible. It was Colonel House who shared Mr. Wilson's labors, and his complete confidence, and filled his place at the Conference table when sickness prevented the President from doing so. . . .' [1]

Colonel House himself did not share in the general criticism of the personnel of the Peace Commission. He admitted that the President would have been on firmer ground politically if he had appointed Taft, Root, and McAdoo.

'That would have been an efficient body,' House wrote later, 'and politically unassailable. Taft might have been given direction of preparing the Covenant for the League of Nations — a task for which he is eminently fit, and to which his heart would have responded in joyous enthusiasm. Root might have taken over the legal questions, which were many

[1] Memorandum communicated to C. S., August, 1924.

and involved. McAdoo would have been a tower of strength in questions of finance — questions more intricate, delicate, and contentious than almost any brought before the Conference. But the President thought best to take to Paris three other advisers, Lansing, White, and Bliss, and except from a political viewpoint he made no mistake.

'It has pleased some to say that there was but one American Commissioner at the Conference and that was President Wilson. This, of necessity, must have been true no matter whom he had taken, for he was the head of the State, and whether in Washington or Paris every question must have gone to him for final decision.

'There were never three abler men, holding important commissions, than Lansing, White, and Bliss, so modest and self-effacing. Lansing's experience in international law and procedure was a constant guidepost. White's lifelong diplomatic career and wide European acquaintance smoothed over many a difficult situation. If there was ever the need of a peacemaker it was at Paris, and White proved himself time and again master of that craft. Bliss, though army trained, has the mind of a statesman and he helped to solve many intricate problems other than those connected with military affairs. There was no abler man at the Peace Conference than Tasker H. Bliss.'

Colonel House was equally warm in his admiration for the Americans at Paris who were not Commissioners. He frequently referred to the qualities of Ambassador Sharp, who had accomplished the difficult task of representing the United States during both the period of American neutrality and belligerency. 'His judgment is keen and his appreciation of the various currents in French opinion acute,' House wrote during the Armistice conferences. To him House turned for advice during the difficult period before the arrival of President Wilson. There are also many references in

House's papers to Admiral Benson, indicating his high opinion of his services: 'He was Secretary Daniels' chief executive officer during the war,' wrote House, 'and there never was a time when the direction of our sea forces was so weighted with peril. Both at the Armistice proceedings and at the Peace Conference, Benson was our Government's adviser. Probably no other American Admiral ever had so many momentous questions come before him or met them more wisely.' [1] Another to whom House constantly turned for advice in matters affecting Europe, was Ambassador Brand Whitlock. Questions affecting Belgium came up again and again at the Peace Conference, and Whitlock's opinion was invaluable. 'It is difficult,' wrote House, 'for the Belgians to speak of Brand Whitlock without emotion. While he represented American interests in a manner to which even the Germans could not take exception, the Belgians felt he was their steadfast friend and defender. The Great War has so intertwined his name with that of the heroic little Kingdom, that in the minds of men he is known as "Whitlock of Belgium."'

House was especially appreciative of the work of those attached to his personal staff. In a memorandum concerning the Peace Conference he wrote:

'No one can ever properly appraise the help rendered the American Commissioners by their individual staffs and by the experts connected with the Inquiry. I was particularly fortunate in this, for among others I had Arthur Hugh Frazier and Stephen Bonsal, both of whom were linguists and long trained and skilled in diplomatic work. No American in Europe had a more intimate knowledge of the war and its genesis than Frazier. He had served in our Embas-

[1] The feeling was mutual. Admiral Benson writes, June 16, 1928: 'One of the happiest memories of a long and lucky life is the association with Colonel House, for whom I have unbounded admiration and warm affection.'

sies in both Germany and Austria and had been for a long time Counselor of our Embassy at Paris. He was assigned to me by the State Department upon nearly every visit I made to Europe after 1914, and he had the distinction of being the only American to sit with the Supreme War Council in 1917–18 in order to send reports to our Government for their information. He had enjoyed long personal contact with the Prime Ministers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Allied Governments, and they held him in such esteem as to be willing to share with him their conferences.

'Colonel Bonsal's experience was of wider range, even if not so closely connected with the belligerent states. He knew the world from North to South and from East to West, and spoke many alien tongues. When delegates came from unfamiliar lands they were placed under his intelligent and sympathetic care. His interpretations and observations were invaluable and there was no man upon whom I leaned more heavily.'

IV

During the month that elapsed between the signing of the Armistice and the arrival of President Wilson, Colonel House exercised no definite functions apart from those implied in his commission as personal representative of the President. It was, however, one of the busiest periods of his entire career. To him came naturally the representatives of all the peoples who desired American assistance in the approaching Peace Conference. He began the development of a service of information through American observers placed in the areas of unrest, which, in view of American intervention in European politics, had become a matter of necessity. Once the place and the personnel of the Conference were determined, he took up the vital question of the recognition of English as an official language on a par with French. He strove also to facilitate a return to normal conditions,

especially through the abolition of the censorship and the organization of economic assistance to Central Europe.

House's interest in organizing relief on a large scale was intense. To the steps taken in this direction soon after the Armistice may be traced the building up of a great system which was ultimately put under the control of Mr. Hoover. During the two following years it became one of the most important international agencies in the world. Before the German Armistice was fully drafted, House had proposed to the Supreme War Council a resolution which was not merely justified on grounds of humanity, but calculated to induce the Germans to accept the Armistice in the hope of securing food: 'If the peoples of Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and of Turkey appeal to the Allies and Associated Powers to furnish food, the latter will do all they can to help them in the name of humanity.' [1] The resolution was passed. As soon as it became clear that Germany would sign the Armistice, House took up the question of raising the blockade on the enemy states and providing relief for them as well as for the regions devastated by fighting.

So varied were his activities that it is impossible to present in brief compass a connected narrative. Selections from his papers to illustrate the nature of his labors may well prove confusing, but they indicate, as nothing else can, the sort of problems which had to be faced before the Peace Conference could proceed to a general settlement. They reflect also the essential fact that the period was one of confusion, not merely because of the nature of the problems themselves, but because the European Premiers were compelled to meet matters of domestic politics which prevented them from making an early effort to organize the machinery for the solution of international problems.

[1] The final text of the resolution was as follows: 'If the peoples of Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey appeal to the Allies and Associated Powers for the supply of provisions, the Allies and Associated Powers will do all they can to assist in a spirit of humanity.'

'*November* 6, 1918: I have asked Colonel Barkley Parsons,' wrote House in his diary, 'to make a preliminary study of the damage done by the Germans in Northeastern France and Belgium. I shall probably get him to take this work up with a sufficient corps of assistants in order that when the French and Belgian Governments make demands at the Peace Conference for reparations and damage, we will have some idea as to the justice of their claims. For instance, it might be said that Germany had done ten millions of damage in a certain town. There would be no way whatever for us to know whether this was even approximately correct.... The more I think of it, the more important it seems to be.[1]

'*November* 8, 1918: I called upon the King of Montenegro, at his request. Attachés in gorgeous uniforms conducted me to his apartment at the Hôtel Meurice. I found the King a pleasant old gentleman who told his story with much dignity. Frazier is writing of our conversation, if, indeed, it might be termed a conversation, for it was more of a monologue by him.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 8, 1918

Probably the greatest problem which will be presented to us upon the cessation of hostilities is the furnishing of food and other essential supplies to the civilian population of Serbia, Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Belgium, and Northern France. This relief work, together with the reconstruction of devastated regions, will have to be done almost entirely through American effort, and with the use of American food, raw materials, and finished products. Difficult questions of priority and the allocation of tonnage will be presented.

[1] On November 17, in reply to House's request for authorization, President Wilson cabled: 'I approve your plan to employ experts on the assessment of damage done.'

At one of the meetings of the Supreme War Council, Mr. Balfour proposed that as a condition of the Armistice to be offered Germany the large amount of German tonnage now in German and neutral ports be handed over during the Armistice for operation by the Allies and the United States under the general supervision and control of the Allied Maritime Transport Council now sitting in London. I advised that this be not made a condition of the Armistice, but be taken up as soon as the Armistice was signed, and Mr. Balfour acquiesced in this suggestion.

I now advise that, instead of adopting Mr. Balfour's suggestion which presents obvious objections, you, as soon as the Armistice with Germany is signed, propose to the Allies and Germany the immediate formation of the 'International Relief Organization.' [1] I suggest that Hoover be placed at the head of this organization and two representatives each be named by England, France, Italy, and Germany. Germany should at once be asked to place at the disposal of this organization until the final Peace Treaty is signed the entire German Merchant Marine now in German or neutral ports. The organization should then be charged with securing food and other supplies immediately required for the civilian populations of the countries set forth and in determining the priority of the needs presented. These supplies would necessarily have to be furnished by the United States and the Allies. It should be pointed out to Germany that only in this way will it be possible for her merchant marine to be placed in service from the inception of the Armistice until the final Peace Treaty is signed, and that her willingness to enter whole-heartedly into such a scheme of relief, which would include her own civilian population, would be the

[1] After a number of discussions the 'Supreme Council for Supply and Relief' was established by the Supreme War Council. It met for the first time on January 11, 1919. Mr. Hoover was appointed Director-General of Relief.

best possible evidence of her desire to alleviate the suffering caused the civilian population of all countries by the exigencies of the war. In this way also the whole question of relief, pending the signing of the final Treaty of Peace, can be kept separate from the very keen struggle which will arise immediately following the signing of the Armistice between the various belligerent nations for selfish trade advantage. It is true that the terms of the Armistice provide that the blockade shall be continued. The impracticability of this, so far as food and other essential supplies are concerned, has already become apparent. Conditions in Austria and in Bohemia are of such a character as to make relief on a large scale imperative if serious disturbances are to be averted. I should appreciate very much an expression of your views on this most urgent matter.[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 8, 1918

We are getting a mass of misinformation respecting present conditions in Austria, Bohemia, and the Ukraine, practically all of which is being furnished us by the English, French, and Italians. We have no American sources of information. The reports received are often colored by the self-interest of the persons furnishing them. I regard it as exceedingly important that we send at once to these countries agents who will be in a position to furnish us with accurate and unbiased information respecting conditions. This work should be under the general direction of a man who is entirely familiar with German and Austrian affairs. I suggest that you constitute Grew [2] a special representative

[1] To this Wilson replied on November 11: 'Our judgment corresponds with yours. Hoover is coming over immediately to discuss the matter and propose one method of handling it.'

[2] Mr. Joseph Grew was appointed Secretary of the American Commission.

of the Department of State to do this work. Of course he should have a number of assistants whom I can secure for him over here. If you approve of this suggestion I will take the necessary steps to set up the organization.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 11, 1918

Concerning Jugo-Slav Italian affairs: If you decide to recognize the National Council of Zagreb as representative of the Serbo-Slovene Nation in territories formerly belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it would be well to assure the Jugo-Slavs in a very guarded way that the question of their territorial aspirations is a matter to be decided by the Peace Conference. This act is advisable in order to reassure them in the face of the Italian occupation of the Dalmatian coast along the line of the Treaty of London, against which I protested and consented only upon the explicit promise that this territory should have the same status as the territory to be occupied under the terms of the German Armistice. It is to the interest of Italy, also, that the conditions of the Armistice should not be made the pretext for prejudging this most difficult territorial question. United States alone is in a position to speak a word of caution, since France and Britain are committed by the Pact of London. A statement that its frontiers should be determined in the interests of all concerned and in accordance with principles accepted by all the Allies, would be reassuring to all small nationalities who are now in a state of high tension.[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[1] Such a statement, although not referring to this particular problem, was later issued by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference on January 24, 1919:

'The Governments now associated in conference to effect a lasting peace among the nations are deeply disturbed by the news which comes

'*November* 12, 1918: The Italian Ambassador was an afternoon caller. He came to assure me that the Italian Government was not acting contrary to the terms of the Armistice in dealing with the Austrian fleet. I told him I was not worried as to their intentions. However, I thought some of my colleagues were very much disturbed and it would be well to satisfy them. . . . I suggested that I write him a letter, asking him about the incident at Pola, so that he could send me a reply and I, in turn, might express confidence in their intention to comply with their promises. This correspondence I promised to take or send to Clemenceau.

'*November* 13, 1918: Henry P. Davison of the Red Cross came to discuss that organization. I urged him to use the Red Cross from now as an agent of mercy in the starving and distressed countries of Europe.

'*November* 15, 1918: Busy to-day outlining the organization for the Peace Congress. The French Government have offered us a plan to form a basis for discussion.[1]

'Baron Sonnino was an afternoon caller. He contended that Italy desired nothing except to have her boundaries rearranged in a way to give protection in the event of invasion. . . . I did not undertake to tell Sonnino that, if they would listen to our plan for a League of Nations, Italy would be amply protected, for I did not wish to start an argument at this time. He is to lunch with me to-morrow.'

to them of the many instances in which armed force is being made use of in many parts of Europe and the East to gain possession of territory, the rightful claim to which the Peace Conference is to be asked to determine.

'They deem it their duty to utter a solemn warning that possession, gained by force, will seriously prejudice the claims of those who use this means. It will create the presumption that those who employ force doubt the justice and validity of their claims and purpose to substitute possession for proof of right, and set up sovereignty by coercion rather than by racial or national preference and national historical association. They thus put a cloud upon any evidence of title they may afterward allege, and indicate their distrust of the Conference itself. . . .'

According to a manuscript note of Colonel House, this statement was drafted by the President himself.

[1] Published in Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 56–63.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 16, 1918

I suggest that you send me a cable which I can show to the heads of the British and French Governments for the purpose of obtaining from them the entire suspension of the present political censorship upon American press despatches. Military necessity can no longer be invoked as a defense of the drastic censorship now being exercised. There seems to me to be no adequate reason why the character of the political information supplied to the American people should be dictated by the French and British Governments.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Diary.] '*November* 18, 1918: X came to discuss the question of censorship. We seemed to be in total disagreement. I desired the lifting of the censorship everywhere and at once; he claimed to desire the same result, but thought it impossible. Curiously enough, he gave as his reason that the members of the Peace Congress would not wish reports of the proceedings to be without censorship. He thought they were entirely justified in this feeling. I did not tell him that my thoughts ran in the other direction, and that one of the reasons I wanted an immediate lifting of the censorship was that a free public discussion might be had about what was going on at the Congress.

'I have come to the conclusion that the consensus of public opinion comes nearer being right than the opinions of the leaders of a country. Only now and then you find a leader who sees more clearly than the people in the aggregate.

'*November* 19, 1918: I asked Derby [1] to ascertain the views of his Government on the lifting of the French censorship. At the same time I made the request that the English censorship be lifted as far as the United States was concerned. I

[1] British Ambassador to France.

shall not press the French Government until I hear from the British.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 20, 1918

. . . The French are urging that the French language be used as the official language at the Conference. Since the French are to be given both the place of meeting and the presidency of the Conference, it would seem as if they should meet the convenience of England and ourselves with respect to the language to be used. At the conferences before the Armistice was signed, Orlando and Pichon were the only ones that could not understand English. In addition to ourselves and the English, Clemenceau, Sonnino, the Belgian representative, the Serbian representative, the Greek representative, and the Japanese representative, are all able to understand English. I shall take this question up with the English in order to see how they feel about it.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 21, 1918

I have just received the following communication from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 'You were good enough to communicate to me under date of yesterday telegram of President Wilson expressing desire that the political censorship applied up to the present to press telegrams from France to America be completely suppressed. I have the honor to inform you that the French Government is happy to respond to the desire of President Wilson. Dispositions will, therefore, be taken immediately to suppress all censorship of press telegrams sent from France to the United States. Please accept, *et cetera*. (Signed) S. Pichon.'

This is of course very satisfactory. I have taken this mat-

ter up with the British authorities through Lord Derby and I expect to have an answer from them before long. I shall advise the press correspondents informally of the action of the French Government and request them to advise me of any further interference with their press despatches.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 23, 1918

Pursuant to your authorization I requested General Pershing to detail such officer in his command as he considered most competent to undertake the work of estimating the damage done by the Germans in Belgium and Northern France on account of which reparation should be required from Germany. General Pershing has detailed for this work Brigadier-General C. H. McKinstry. I have conferred with General McKinstry and have asked him to advise me, after he has considered the problem how he believes this work can be done.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 27, 1918

. . . Wiseman says that Mr. Balfour believes we will have considerable difficulty in inducing the French to meet our views on the language question. Mr. Balfour suggests that Lord Derby and I take up with Clemenceau the question of arranging for the use of both English and French as the official languages of the Conference. Do you wish me to proceed along these lines? [1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 27, 1918

Hoover arrived in Paris Tuesday morning. I am fully advised of and in agreement with his plans [for relief]. They

[1] Approved by the President and finally determined in this sense by the Peace Conference.

are in general in accordance with my telegram . . . which you approved in principle, such alterations having been incorporated therein to meet the Allied desire for coördination of action and our policy of maintaining independence of American action. The chief problem presented is the difficulty of devising a plan which will not antagonize the Allies and particularly Great Britain and at the same time permit single American leadership in relief to the civilian populations of Europe. I am sure you will agree that American leadership is essential, taking into account the fact that we are the most disinterested nation and the other Allies are affected by local political interests. Further, the supplies to be utilized for this purpose must in the main be obtained in the United States and will dominate American markets.

As I have previously informed you, George has asked Clemenceau, Orlando, and myself to come to London on December first for a meeting of the Supreme War Council. I replied that while I hoped to be able to be present it would depend on my doctor's decision. . . . The matters that Hoover and I have discussed will not permit of delay in reaching a decision and accordingly I suggest that the views of the United States Government be presented in writing to the three Prime Ministers at their meeting in London. . . .[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 28, 1918

I am now advised through Wiseman that the British Government have abolished the political censorship of press despatches for the United States from Great Britain.

EDWARD HOUSE

[1] House suggested in the latter part of his cable a programme which Wilson presented to the Prime Ministers and which ultimately resulted in the organization of relief under Hoover. See appendix to this chapter.

[Diary.] '*December* 4, 1918: Dmowski [1] discussed Polish affairs and the formation of a Polish State. He looks with much concern upon Bolshevik Russia on the one side and Germany on the other — which, as he expressed it, was passing through its Elizabethan Period. He thinks Germany is three hundred years behind the balance of civilized Europe in her thought and it is for that reason she came to grief. I urged upon Dmowski moderation and a coalition government, so they might at least start with a fair prospect of harmony.

'Sharp wished to discuss the protocol of the President's arrival and subsequent entertainment in France. The Foreign Office asked him to take it up with me and decide. For instance, it was a question whether the reception to be given at the Hôtel de Ville was to be for the President alone or for the President and Mrs. Wilson. . . . I advised the latter. Another question was how Mrs. Wilson should drive in the procession. It was arranged that she should go with Madame Poincaré and follow the President, who would be with President Poincaré. Still another question was when the President should arrive at Brest. It had been arranged that he should be here on Friday the 13th, but since that does not seem feasible we arranged for him to reach Paris on Saturday the 14th. The day of his arrival will be proclaimed a holiday.

'*December* 5, 1918: I saw a delegation of Socialists, among them Albert Thomas and four or five others. They desire to give the President a rousing reception in Paris and plan to send representatives to meet him at Brest.

'Léon Bourgeois followed Clemenceau. He is President of the Society for the League of Nations. We discussed it at much length and found ourselves nearly in agreement. The greatest difference was that he does not wish Germany to have the right to join the League at present. I differed from him and thought unless we took her in at once there would

[1] Chairman of the Polish Committee in Paris.

be an incentive for her to form another league, thereby creating a balance of power. Not only that: If she were not in the League we would have no control over her and she might go on arming and doing things contrary to the purpose of the League. . . .

'Lord Derby discussed the question of feeding Europe and the proposal I had put to the Allied Governments regarding Hoover. Derby thought it would be impossible to leave it to the Supreme War Council because there were no food experts upon it. I suggested as an alternative the formation of an economic section of the Supreme War Council.[1]

'*December* 12, 1918: Hoover and Davis [2] came in first. We took up all the questions relating to the international food control and the necessary financing of it.

'*December* 13, 1918: To-day has been another heart-breaking one. It was Hoover, Davis, and Dr. Taylor again upon the question of supplying relief at Vienna and that immediate vicinity. It is a matter of hours almost, and cannot be postponed. I took the decision and told them to go ahead regardless of what the French and English Governments might think, and sent Frazier to notify these Governments of what we intended to do. I had Frazier take Hoover and Davis to see President Masaryk,[3] and authorized them to say that the United States would condemn any policy of obstruction looking to the prevention of coal going into Austria for the relief of the suffering population. Masaryk claimed that the coal mines were in possession of the Germans and that it was impossible for him to take action.

[1] On February 8, 1919, on President Wilson's motion the Supreme Council provided for the appointment of a Supreme Economic Council, which met for the first time on February 17. Mr. Hoover was appointed chairman of the Food and Relief Section.

[2] Norman Davis, United States Treasury representative in London and Paris, 1918; finance commissioner of United States to Europe, 1919.

[3] Chairman of the Czecho-Slovak Committee and first President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic.

However, we are insisting upon something being done, and at once.'

V

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 25, 1918

I am in receipt of the following message from Lloyd George: 'Monsieur Clemenceau is coming to London on 1st December and I earnestly hope you will be able to come also, as a number of urgent questions require discussion. As I shall not be able to attend any conferences in Paris before the election of the 14th of December, this is especially important. I am inviting Signor Orlando also.'

I have advised Lloyd George that I am still in bed, but that I hope that my doctor will permit me to go to London on or about December 1 for the conference in question. I am feeling better, but am still weak, and I will not be able to tell before Thursday or Friday of this week whether I can make the journey.

EDWARD HOUSE

Because of his illness House was finally unable to attend the London conversations between the British, French, and Italians, at which the first definite steps were taken towards preparing questions for the Peace Conference. The chief topics discussed at London concerned the appointment of a commission to study the enemy's capacity to pay reparation, the trial of the Kaiser, and international relief. One important decision was that at the preliminary Peace Conference the smaller Allied Powers should be represented only when questions of particular interest to them were under discussion, and that new States be allowed to present their claims to the Conference. In this way the composition and to some extent the procedure of the Peace Conference were settled.

Colonel House sent to the President a full report of the proceedings at London.[1]

'*December* 5, 1918: Clemenceau called in the afternoon to tell of the London meeting. We talked of that part of the resolution related to the trial of the Kaiser. He is in favor of it in a mild way. Sonnino last night expressed himself against it. He thought it would merely create sympathy and would do no good. He thought Holland would refuse to give him up and we would be imprudent to make her.'

On December 7 House moved over from his headquarters, 78 rue de l'Université, where so many of the historic Armistice conferences had taken place, to the Hôtel de Crillon, which was to become the official home of the American Peace Commission. Two days later he wrote in his diary that he regarded his special mission as at an end. 'The President is in European waters now and can be easily reached by wireless. Therefore I shall make no further decisions myself.' His attention was largely taken up with the details of the President's arrival. For a time Wilson planned to land first in England, but later followed House's advice that he come directly to France.[2] Upon the suggestion of the navy officials, who were acquainted with the area of floating mines, Brest was chosen as the landing port.[3] On the invitation of the French Government the President, while in Paris, was to occupy the house of Prince Murat in the Parc Monceau.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *December* 9, 1918

According to present plans I understand that you will arrive in Paris at 10 A.M. on Saturday, December 14. Upon

[1] See appendix to this chapter.
[2] Wilson to House, November 25, 1918.
[3] Lansing to House, November 27, 1918.

your arrival you will be taken at once to your residence. At 12.30 a large formal lunch will be given in your honor at the Élysée Palace by President Poincaré. A committee of laboring men and Socialists, headed by Albert Thomas, Renaudel, and Cachin, wish to present you with an address at 3.30 P.M. on Saturday, the 14th, and hold a monster parade in your honor at that time. This is not definite, but will probably take place. On Monday, December 16, a formal reception will be tendered you and Mrs. Wilson by the City of Paris at the Hôtel de Ville at 2.30 P.M. and I have accepted for you. I have told Wiseman to tell Balfour and George that you will keep Tuesday, December 17, Wednesday, December 18, and possibly the 19th free for conferences with them, and I expect both Balfour and George will be in Paris on the 17th. December 19 and 20 the King of Italy, the Italian Prime Minister, and Baron Sonnino will be in Paris. The French and Belgian Governments are most insistent that you should make a trip to the devastated regions of France and Belgium. Accordingly the French Government are making arrangements for you to take a trip beginning December 26 which will occupy approximately three days, through Northern France and Belgium.[1] At the same time it is planned that you should visit our army. Your trip to Italy, which I believe is necessary, might be begun on December 29th or 30th in order that you may return to Paris by January 3d or 4th for the first formal conferences between the Allies. Clemenceau has told me that the English elections, the French celebrations, and the official visits to Paris have made it abso-

[1] President Wilson spent Christmas with the American army, but postponed his inspection of the French and Belgian battlefields until the following spring, thereby incurring much criticism. Mr. A. H. Frazier writes as follows regarding President Wilson's objections to visiting the devastated regions: 'I remember that when I first broached the idea he remarked: "The French want me to see red. I could not despise the Germans more than I do already." He may or may not have been right in his determination, but at any rate the explanation sheds light on his character.'

lutely impossible to begin these formal conferences before January 3d or 4th. Will you please let me know if you wish me to take any particular action with reference to the foregoing.

EDWARD HOUSE

PARIS, *December* 12, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The doctor thinks it will not be prudent for me to go to Brest, therefore I am awaiting your arrival here.

There will be an official *déjeuner* of some two hundred and fifty people at the Élysée Palace at 12.30 on Saturday. President Poincaré will make a short speech to which you will be expected to reply. These speeches are usually limited to from ten to forty lines. If I were you I would confine my remarks to a statement indicating that the United States understands and sympathizes with the heavy trials and suffering which the Allies have undergone for the past four years, and that we are deeply sensible and sympathetic of the problems with which they are now confronted.

There has been an effort here to make it appear that we are not only ignorant of the situation, but are not in sympathy with it. Such a statement from you would clear the atmosphere and make easier the work which awaits you.

You will probably not reach Prince Murat's residence before 11.15, but you will be expected to immediately return the President's call in the state carriage which will be held at your residence for this purpose. It seems absurd to make a call at 11.30 when you are to lunch at the Élysée Palace at 12.30, but such are the ways of official Europe.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On the following day the *George Washington*, with the President on the bridge, rode up to the harbor of Brest through a majestic line of battleships and destroyers, French and American, their guns thundering the Presidential salute. Although the day was a Friday and sailors shook their heads at the ill omen, it was also the 13th of the month, in Wilson's mind his lucky number. The next morning he was greeted in Paris by tumultuous and enthusiastic crowds, the representative of the new era, the dispenser of justice, the protector of the oppressed.

APPENDIX

HOUSE'S PLAN FOR RELIEF

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November* 27, 1918

. . . I suggest that you send me a cable instructing me to present to the Supreme War Council the following plan:

'*Sirs:* 1. I have given much thought to the formulation of the most practicable means of carrying into effect the resolution presented by Colonel House at the last meeting of the Supreme War Council in a spirit of humanity sailles to the effect that the Supreme War Council in a spirit of humanity desired to coöperate in making available, as far as possible, supplies necessary for the relief of the civilian populations of the European countries affected by the war.

'2. In considering this matter I have had constantly in mind the urgent necessity of the case and the fact that it is essential in the working out of relief of this character on a large scale, that there be a unity of direction similar in character to that which has proved so successful under French and British Chief Command in the operations of the Allies on the land and on sea respectively. I suggest that the Supreme War Council proceed along the following lines:

'3. In order to secure effective administration there should be created a Director General of Relief whose field of activities will cover not only enemy populations, but also the whole of the populations liberated from enemy yoke and the neutrals contiguous to these territories.

'4. It is obvious that present Interallied administrative arrangements cover the Allied countries themselves and if the whole of the world's food supplies could be made available through sufficient shipping, there appears to be sufficiency over and above Allied necessities to take effective care of these other populations, provided that these supplies are administered with care, with economy, and with single direction.

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'*Sirs:* 1. I have given much thought to the formulation of the most practicable means of carrying into effect the resolution presented by Colonel House at the last meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles to the effect that the Supreme War Council in a spirit of humanity desired to coöperate in making available, as far as possible, supplies necessary for the relief of the civilian populations of the European countries affected by the war.

'2. In considering this matter I have had constantly in mind the urgent necessity of the case and the fact that it is essential in the working out of relief of this character on a large scale, that there be a unity of direction similar in character to that which has proved so successful under French and British Chief Command in the operations of the Allies on the land and on sea respectively. I suggest that the Supreme War Council proceed along the following lines:

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'5. The one essential to this plan in order that all world supplies may be brought into play is that enemy tonnage shall be brought into service at the earliest possible moment. It would appear to me entirely just that the enemy shipping in consideration of relief of enemy territory should be placed in the General Food Service of all of the populations released from the enemy yoke as well as enemy territory.

'6. I have carefully considered the suggestion made by Mr. Balfour to the Supreme War Council at the time the terms of armistice to be offered the enemy were under discussion to the effect that the enemy should be required to place under the operation and control of the Allied Maritime Transport Council the enemy mercantile fleet in enemy and neutral ports. It appears to me that in practice there would be many embarrassments presented by this plan, and that the principle should be maintained that this fleet be used as to its carrying capacity for purposes of relief and be under the direction of the Director-General of Relief. . . .

'7. In the operations of the Director-General of Relief, he would, of course, purchase and sell foodstuffs to enemy populations and therefore not require financial assistance in this particular further than working capital. In the relief of newly liberated peoples such as Belgium, Poland, Servia (including Jugo-Slavia), and Bohemia, it will no doubt be necessary to provide temporary advances from the Associated Governments to these recuperating nationalities with which they can purchase supplies from the Director-General, such arrangements to be worked out by the Associated Treasuries. In some cases public charity may have to be mobilized.

'8. In the Director-General's dealings with neutrals they of course would provide their own shipping and financial resources and probably some tonnage and food, either directly or indirectly for the purposes of the Director-General, they acting under his direction and authorization as to supplies and sources thereof. The Director-General, of course, acting in these matters in coöperation with the blockade authorities of the Allies and United States.

'9. It is obvious that it is only the surplus food supply of the world beyond the necessities of the Allies that is available to the Director-General.

'10. In order to prevent profiteering the Director-General must make his purchases directly from the respective food administrations of the Associated Governments where his supplies arise from their territories, and where purchasing in neutral markets he should act in coöperation with the established Interallied agencies.

'11. It is evident that after the Allies have supplied themselves from their own territories at home and abroad and the balance from other sources, the only effective source of surplus supplies available for relief lie to a minor extent in the Argentine but to a vast preponderance in the United States. The Director-General will have a large command of American resources and markets and will require the undivided support of the American people in saving and productive activities.

'Owing to the political necessity of American control over American resources and the greater coördination and efficiency to be obtained

thereby, I am sure that you will agree with me that the office of Director-General of Relief must be held initially by the U.S. Food Administrator and in case of necessity, by such a successor as may be nominated by me. I would suggest, however, that the policies of the Director-General should be determined by the Supreme War Council, to whom he should report, it being our united policies in these matters not only to save life, but also to stabilize governments.

'All these arrangements to be for the period of emergency and it is highly desirable for them to be liquidated as fast as practicable.

'It is exceedingly important that I have your advice concerning the matter at the earliest possible moment. Wilson.' [1]

EDWARD HOUSE

HOUSE'S REPORT OF LONDON CONFERENCE

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *December* 5, 1918

Sonnino, Lord Derby, and Clemenceau have each given me a separate account of the proceedings on December 2d and 3d at the conferences held in London between Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando. The following is a summary of these proceedings.

I. Meeting held December 2d at 11 A.M.

Resolution (*a*). Regret expressed my absence on account of illness and Mr. Balfour directed to transmit conclusions of Conference to me.

Resolution (*b*). Establishment of Interallied Commission, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States each to have three delegates thereon and Japan one delegate, to examine and report on amount enemy countries are able to pay for reparation and indemnity. Form of payment also to be considered. The Commission to meet in Paris provided the United States Government agrees. Each Government to compile its claims for reparation, which will be referred for examination by Interallied Commission to be nominated when claims are prepared.

Resolution (*c*). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that Kaiser and principal accomplices should be brought to trial before international court. Telegram respecting this was sent to Washington on December 2d. (I assume that you have already seen it and therefore do not quote it.) Immediate action to be taken in this matter provided President Wilson agrees; otherwise matter to be left for discussion after President Wilson arrives.

Resolution (*d*). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that before preliminaries of peace shall be signed an Interallied Conference be held in Paris or Versailles, the date thereof to be set after the arrival of

[1] For the creation and work of the Supreme Council for Supply and Relief, see Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, I, 295.

the President. France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States should each be represented by five delegates. British Colonial representatives to attend as additional members when questions directly affecting them are considered. Smaller Allied Powers not to be represented except when questions concerning them are discussed. Nations attaining their independence since war to be heard by Interallied Conference.[1]

II. Meeting December 2d, 4 P.M.

Resolution (*a*). British, French, and Italian Governments authorize Foch to renew Armistice on December 10th for one month.

Resolution (*b*). British, French, and Italian Governments empowered Admiral Wemyss, on condition that forts at entrance to Baltic are demolished to satisfaction of Allied Naval Commission, to waive military occupation of said forts.

Resolution (*c*). British, French, and Italian Governments approve requirement of Admiral Beatty that while interned in British ports German flag shall be hauled down on board German men-of-war.

Resolution (*d*). British, French, and Italian Governments agree to formation of Interallied Commission of four admirals (American, British, French, Italian) to enquire and report on existing situation and advise as to future action to eliminate trouble in Adriatic territories occupied or to be occupied by Allied forces, not including those mentioned in Article III of Austrian Armistice terms, such as Corfu, Spalato, Fiume, etc.

III. Meeting December 3d at 11.15 A.M.

Resolution (*a*). Proposed conference between Foch and Chief of British Staff respecting arrangements of British portion of Army of Occupation agreed to by British Government.

Resolution (*b*). Expenses of occupation of Austria to be arranged for by Italian Commander-in-Chief and General Franchet d'Esperey. When military proposals are formulated, they are to be submitted to Governments concerned through Foch.

Resolution (*c*). British, French, and Italian Governments agreed theoretically not to object to international relief, labor, or any other conference in relation to Peace Conference being held, provided that until peace is signed it is held in a neutral country.

IV. Meeting December 3d at 4 P.M.

Resolution (*a*). Examination of question of victualling and supplying enemy, Allies and neutral countries in all its aspects, including the use of enemy merchant vessels, is referred to the following for examination and report. Clementel and Bouisson (representing the French); Reading and Maclay (representing the British); Crespi and Villa (representing the Italians); Hoover and Hurley, if available (representing United States).

Resolution (*b*). British troops in any part of European Turkey to remain under command of General Franchet d'Esperey. Rest of British army under General Milne may be transferred to Caucasus or elsewhere

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[1] It was this conference which became the Peace Conference itself. The plan for negotiating preliminary treaties of peace was not carried into effect.

upon agreement being reached between countries concerned. If so, transferred British army will cease to be under command of d'Esperey.

Resolution (c). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that conclusions of Conference should be regarded as provisional only and subject to the United States [approved] excepting those which require immediate action or do not concern United States.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 2d at 11 A.M., I am advising the Governments concerned: 1. That eliminating the word 'indemnity' from Resolution (*b*) the United States agrees to resolution; 2. That Resolution (c) should be discussed after your arrival. With these exceptions I suggest that the United States agree to these resolutions. With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 2d at 4 P.M., I have discussed the naval and military features with General Bliss and Admiral Benson and am stating to the Governments concerned that the United States agrees to these resolutions.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 3d at 11.15 A.M. I suggest that you authorize me to state that the United States agrees to these resolutions.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 3d at 4 P.M., I have suggested to Lord Derby that instead of following the procedure outlined in Resolution (*a*) a Food Section of the Supreme War Council be set up with representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy thereon and that substantially the plan suggested in my number 188, as subsequently amended, be adopted. With this exception I suggest that you authorize me to state that the United States agrees to these resolutions. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEACE CONFERENCE CONVENES

They are not getting anywhere, largely because of the lack of organization.

Colonel House's Diary, January 22, 1919

I

THE coming of President Wilson to Europe stimulated lively interest in political circles. The statesmen recognized the influence which he exercised over the popular mind and were somewhat disturbed by their ignorance of his intentions. How was he minded to apply the principles with which his name had become synonymous, and what sort of revolution in international affairs would his application imply? Of all the European leaders, only Mr. Balfour and M. Tardieu had met and talked with the President. They set themselves to learn everything possible about him, his background, his tastes, his prejudices. Mr. Lloyd George, inviting Sir William Wiseman to luncheon, cross-examined the latter for upwards of an hour regarding the President. Possibly they were less sorry for the inevitable delay in calling the Peace Conference, since it gave them a chance to study the attitude they would take towards the President. Their interest was increased by the warmth of the reception given Wilson in Paris, in London, and in the English provinces. Everywhere he was hailed as the leader of the new crusade for the rights of humanity.

In order to clarify the President's position and especially to alleviate the fears of the British, Colonel House agreed with Wilson on the publication of an interview in which he should express himself upon the major issues of the coming settlement. Although the interview was ostensibly written by the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, it was carefully

drafted beforehand under the supervision of Colonel House and Sir William Wiseman, and represents a studied expression of Wilsonian policy couched in terms least likely to offend conservative European opinion. The most important aspect of the interview was to be found in the reference to British sea power. Great Britain, Wilson insisted, by the fact of her geographical position as well as because of her historical tradition, must be recognized as having an especial interest in all naval problems.[1]

Colonel House had hoped that the arrival of Wilson in Paris would make possible the convocation of the preliminary conference, which had originally been planned for December 17. But political problems in Great Britain and France compelled further delay. The final results of the British elections had to be evaluated before Lloyd George was ready to name his delegation; and Clemenceau felt it necessary to test the temper of the French Parliament before he could determine the exact character of his policy in the coming Peace Conference. The month of December passed, while Wilson marked time. He had various talks with Clemenceau and Orlando, and he delivered some public speeches, which increased his personal prestige; he made brief visits to Great Britain and Italy. But despite the enthusiasm of the popular ovations given him, the delay was not in his favor, since political opinion, especially in France and Italy, was setting towards a demand for the fulfillment of extreme nationalist aspirations.

The early conversations between Clemenceau and Wilson, which took place soon after the President reached Paris, indicated how far apart were their ideas on the peace. Clemenceau insisted above everything upon the security of France; the League of Nations he regarded as a luxury, perhaps a danger. Wilson made plain in his first conference with House, on December 14, that he intended 'making the League of

[1] The interview is published in the *Times*, December 21, 1918.

Nations the center of the whole programme and letting everything revolve around that. Once that is a *fait accompli*, nearly all the very serious difficulties will disappear.' In the case of Italian claims, it soon appeared that Wilson would find himself quite as much at variance with Orlando and Sonnino. His conversations broke down the belief of the Europeans that he was a cold doctrinaire, with no appreciation of the peculiar difficulties of Europe; but they made little progress towards agreement. Because of House's close personal relations with Clemenceau, the President asked him to assist at their conferences. The following excerpts are taken from House's diary.

'*December* 15, 1918: Clemenceau, the President, and I were together for an hour. I have never seen an initial meeting a greater success. The President was perfect in the matter and manner of his conversation, and Clemenceau was not far behind. Neither said anything that was particularly misleading. They simply did not touch upon topics which would breed discussion. . . . I took Clemenceau downstairs afterward and he expressed keen delight over the interview and the President personally. The President was equally happy when I returned upstairs and discussed the matter with him. It was a pleasant augury for success.

'*December* 18, 1918: This morning the President telephoned asking if I did not think we ought to have a serious conversation with Clemenceau. He desired to know if we had not better take up the most important subject — the League of Nations. He asked me to make an appointment for to-night at eight or to-morrow morning at ten. Frazier arranged the engagement with Clemenceau at ten at the President's house.

'*December* 19, 1918: I went to the President's house fifteen minutes before Clemenceau arrived, to suggest a method by which the conversation could be easily brought around to the

League of Nations. The Freedom of the Seas was the topic I thought best suited to this subject.

'During the hour and a half we were together, the President did nearly all the talking. . . . Clemenceau expressed himself, in a mild way, in agreement with the President. He thought a League of Nations should be attempted, but he was not confident of success, either of forming it or of its being workable after it was formed. . . .

'*December* 21, 1918: The President, Orlando, Sonnino, and I were together from ten until twelve o'clock. The President talked well, but he did not convince the Italians that they should lessen their hold on the Pact of London. On the contrary, Sonnino convinced the President that from a military point of view Italy was pretty much at the mercy of the nations holding the Dalmatian coast.

'The President afterward said in talking with me that the next time they had a conversation he thought he could suggest some way by which their argument could be met. This might be done by insisting that the forts along the Dalmatian coast should be demolished, and that the Jugo-Slavs should agree to have no navy and but a small standing army. . . .

'*December* 24, 1918: The President asked me this morning to make an engagement for him to see Clemenceau. He showed me a part of the speech he is to make at the Guildhall in London, the part he was afraid might cause some criticism. It had reference to the anxiety of the people that the Peace Conference should begin work, a matter that we decided it would be well for him to touch upon at the earliest opportunity. He was afraid that what he said was too pointed. I did not share this feeling.

'*December* 26, 1918: Clemenceau sent word this morning that he would like to come to see me before lunch. I asked if I might not call on him instead. I called at the War Office to find him rather excited over a statement which Marshal Foch had just made concerning the movement of American troops.

Foch told him Pershing had said that, within four months after the signing of the Armistice, all American troops would be out of France. I knew that Pershing had not made such a statement. What he may have said was that four months after the signing of peace, all our troops would be out of France.

'Clemenceau was quite content with the assurance, which I shall make more certain by communicating directly with Pershing. . . .

'Hoover and I had a long talk upon relief matters. We agreed that the Entente countries are taking a perfectly impossible stand. They are making it more difficult for Germany under peace conditions than it was under war. They have restricted the German fishing fleet; they insist that no German gold shall be paid out for food we are willing to send her; they are establishing certain zones from which no articles of commerce may be sent or brought in. We cannot get them to consent to the relief of Vienna under terms which will enable us to help. We now have an enormous amount of food at Trieste, but it cannot be moved to Vienna because of the difficulties that are raised.'

Immediately after Christmas, President Wilson left for England, where he was the guest of the King, made some speeches in the provinces, and conferred with members of the British Government. House's health was precarious and his attention was taken up by the economic and territorial problems now under intensive study by the Inquiry. He remained therefore in Paris. The American programme at the Conference was not facilitated by the overwhelming success of the electoral campaign of Lloyd George, which was based upon such slogans as 'Hang the Kaiser,' and 'Make the Germans pay to the last pfennig.' On December 29, Clemenceau explained his policy to the Chamber of Deputies, declaring frankly for the old international system of the balance

of power, based upon alliances; in this, he insisted, France would find her security, rather than in what he termed, with more than a trace of satire, the 'noble simplicity' [1] of President Wilson. His majority approving this policy was practically four to one, and, as House wrote in his diary, was 'about as bad an augury for the success of progressive principles at the Peace Conference as we could have.' The Colonel added: 'Coming on the heels of the English elections, and taking into consideration the result of recent elections in the United States,[2] the situation strategically could not be worse.' House believed that Wilson's best if not his only effective policy lay in stressing the fact that the American terms had already been accepted by the Allies at the time of the Armistice. 'Without that,' he wrote in his diary, 'I am afraid we would have but little chance of accomplishing the things we have so much at heart.'

Two days later House had a long conversation with Mr. Balfour. In this he attempted to secure some agreement upon the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, which, according to Mr. Lloyd George's understanding, would be raised at the Peace Conference.

'*December* 31, 1918: Mr. Balfour has arrived from London, called this afternoon and spent nearly two hours with me. We went over every phase of the current situation and of all matters which might properly be brought before the Peace Conference. . . .

'He had only one argument to controvert what I said [on the Freedom of the Seas], to the effect that it would deprive England of the power to help right wrongs, as she had been able to do during the present war against Germany. I met this by saying there would be no objection to her having as

[1] *Noble candeur.*

[2] In which the Republican success gave that party control of the Senate and its Foreign Relations Committee.

large a navy as now, and that she could use it in the event the League of Nations undertook to discipline an outlaw nation.

'He seemed to see, as I do, that Great Britain would fare better under my definition than she would under the definition of her extreme "Blue Water School."

'He told me of the conversation which he and Lloyd George had with the President and of their fairly general agreement. I outlined to him my plan for the League of Nations, which he seemed to accept as practical and satisfactory. He hoped Lord Robert Cecil and I would get together next week and work out something. He goes to the South of France to-night, intending to remain only four or five days.

'*January* 1, 1919: The President [1] told in much detail of his conversation with Lloyd George, Balfour, Bonar Law, and others, and we discussed Clemenceau's speech in the Chamber of Deputies. . . .

'I am advising him [Wilson] to say to the American people that at the November elections they gave the Republican Party a mandate to legislate, and, yielding to their wishes as expressed at the polls, he would not make any recommendations regarding measures, but would leave them free to carry out the will of the people. I hope he will offer to help with advice and information when called upon, but will drive it home again and again that the Opposition have the legislative reins in their hands and must be responsible for results. By rights, the Republicans should now have both the executive and legislative departments of Government in their hands, but since this is not quite possible under our Constitution the next best thing is for the Executive to yield, as far as legislation is concerned. . . .'

[1] Just back from his visit to Great Britain.

II

In the midst of numerous conferences designed to prepare the way for the Peace Conference, House was brought into connection with two interesting developments which later proved of importance. The first was the plan to extend the activities of the International Red Cross at Geneva in connection with the League of Nations.

'*January* 2, 1919: Perhaps the most interesting caller,' wrote House in his diary, 'was Harry Davison of the Red Cross. He came to tell of his conception of a new field of endeavor for that institution. I endorsed the plan with enthusiasm and promised to help in getting the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy back of it. Davison's idea is to turn the management [of the Red Cross] over to some one else and to go back home to his banking interests. Against this I made a strong plea. I told him he had become a world figure and that it would be a mistake to go back into the counting-house, since he would lose his opportunity to make an imperishable name for himself. I hoped he would go ahead with the new work with the same vigor he had used to promote the old.'

Colonel House to M. Clemenceau [1]

PARIS, *January* 14, 1919

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

President Wilson has asked me on his behalf to bring to your attention a matter which the President regards as of very great importance. It concerns a suggestion by Mr. Henry P. Davison, Chairman of the War Council of the American Red Cross, for enlarging the scope of the International Red Cross to include peace-time activities.

As you know, the Geneva Convention, under which the

[1] House addressed a similar letter to the other Prime Ministers.

Red Cross organizations operate, was based upon service in time of war. It so happens that the charter granted by the Congress of the United States to the American Red Cross was broader than the Geneva Convention, making provision for it 'to carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace, and to apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same.'

Under this charter the American Red Cross has demonstrated the possibility of doing a very large voluntary relief work for suffering humanity and, as I am informed, other national Red Cross societies have already enlarged their normal scope of operation.

Mr. Davison submits that in view of present conditions throughout the world, and in view of the hope that future wars can be averted, there should be a revision of the Geneva Convention to include Red Cross activities in time of peace. He therefore suggests that, in coöperation, the respective representatives of the Red Cross organizations of England, Japan, Italy, France, and America should jointly request the International Red Cross at Geneva to call a conference of the Red Cross organizations of the world, excepting those of the Central Powers, which would be invited to participate after peace, for the purpose of adopting a revised convention.

He expresses the belief that under the International Red Cross, with enlarged scope, the Red Cross organizations of the various countries — and there should be one in every country — would stimulate and develop activities in their respective countries for the betterment of mankind.

Such endeavors should include not alone provision for help in case of great disasters, but for medical research and also for such activities as the promotion of public health and sanitation, the welfare of children and mothers, the education and training of nurses, the care and prevention of per-

sonal injuries in civil life, the care and prevention of tuberculosis and other chronic diseases, as well as other activities which would tend to the continuous relief and prevention of very real and daily tragedies in the homes of peoples throughout the world.

It is not contemplated that the Red Cross will itself, within [each] respective country, engage in all of these activities, but rather that they should encourage and develop proper agencies to do so.

Both President Wilson and I feel that there are great possibilities in this movement; that it is in harmony with the spirit of the day and that it will be welcomed by the peoples of the world as obviously its only motive and purpose can be in their common interest.

Not the least of the advantages to be derived from such a movement should be the realization, on the part of the peoples of many countries, of their obligations to their fellow men.

Although the Red Cross is not strictly a governmental agency, but rather a voluntary organization, it is clear that a moral endorsement on the part of the more important Governments is essential to ensure the fullest possibilities of the plan. It is the President's hope that you may find yourself in accord with the suggestion and that you will therefore delegate some one to communicate with the representatives of your Red Cross organization, expressing to them your desire that they cordially coöperate in the movement. The success of the conference would seem assured if it can be made clear that the movement has at the outset the unqualified approval and support of the Governments named.

I trust that it will be possible for you to advise me in the near future respecting this matter.

I am, my dear Prime Minister

Faithfully yours

E. M. House

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, *January* 24, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have duly received your most interesting letter in which you were good enough to inform me of the suggestion of Mr. Henry P. Davison, President of the War Council of the American Red Cross; in this suggestion he proposes to enlarge the scope of the International Red Cross and to develop its beneficent action in times of peace.

I believe with President Wilson that Mr. Davison's initiative deserves to be encouraged on account of the eminently humanitarian purpose which inspires it.

The ideas of the President of the War Council of the American Red Cross have moreover several times been discussed by periodic Congresses of the International Red Cross of Geneva, notably in Washington in 1912, where Messrs. Ador and White presided.

The practical realization of this project necessarily requires preliminary studies on the part of the various Red Cross Societies of the Allied and Associated Powers.

I have reason to think that the Central Committee of the French Red Cross proposes to investigate this matter after the meeting which Mr. Davison has called to be held at Cannes on February 1st, where the French Red Cross will be represented, in order to ascertain the precise ideas of the President of the American Red Cross War Council.

As far as any ulterior invitation is concerned, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, for a Conference destined either to revise the Convention of Geneva, or for a general extension of the activities of all the Red Cross Societies in times of peace, I believe the question should be the object of conversations between the Allied and Associated Governments and their respective Red Cross Societies.[1]

Very cordially yours G. CLEMENCEAU

[1] In May, 1919, a League of Red Cross Societies was formed in Paris,

To House were sent many appeals for assistance from the struggling nationalities, who counted upon the Peace Conference, not merely for decision as to ultimate boundaries, but for practical aid in the efforts they were making to establish an independent position. The most stirring was from Paderewski, who as Prime Minister of Poland found himself compelled to face attacks from without, at the moment when the newly reborn state was torn by domestic faction. Colonel House had for Paderewski an enduring affection which led to a friendship that after the Peace Conference brought the two together at every opportunity. He had equal admiration for his ability. Paderewski, he wrote later, 'had gathered together the fragments of a broken kingdom and moulded it into a virile and liberty-loving republic. He came as the spokesman of an ancient people whose wrongs and sorrows had stirred the sympathies of an entire world. This artist, patriot, and statesman awakened the Congress to do justice to his native land, and sought its help to make a great dream come true. His perfervid eloquence brought about the renascence of Poland and added new lustre to a famous name.'

Upon President Wilson House urged the formal recognition of the Polish State and speedy rendering of whatever immediate assistance the Allies at Paris could furnish in a practical sense.

with which some thirty-two national societies became affiliated. In order to prevent conflicts between the League and the Interallied Committee, a mixed commission was formed. Article XXV of the Covenant reads: 'The Members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and coöperation of duly authorized voluntary national Red Cross organizations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.'

Premier Paderewski to Colonel House

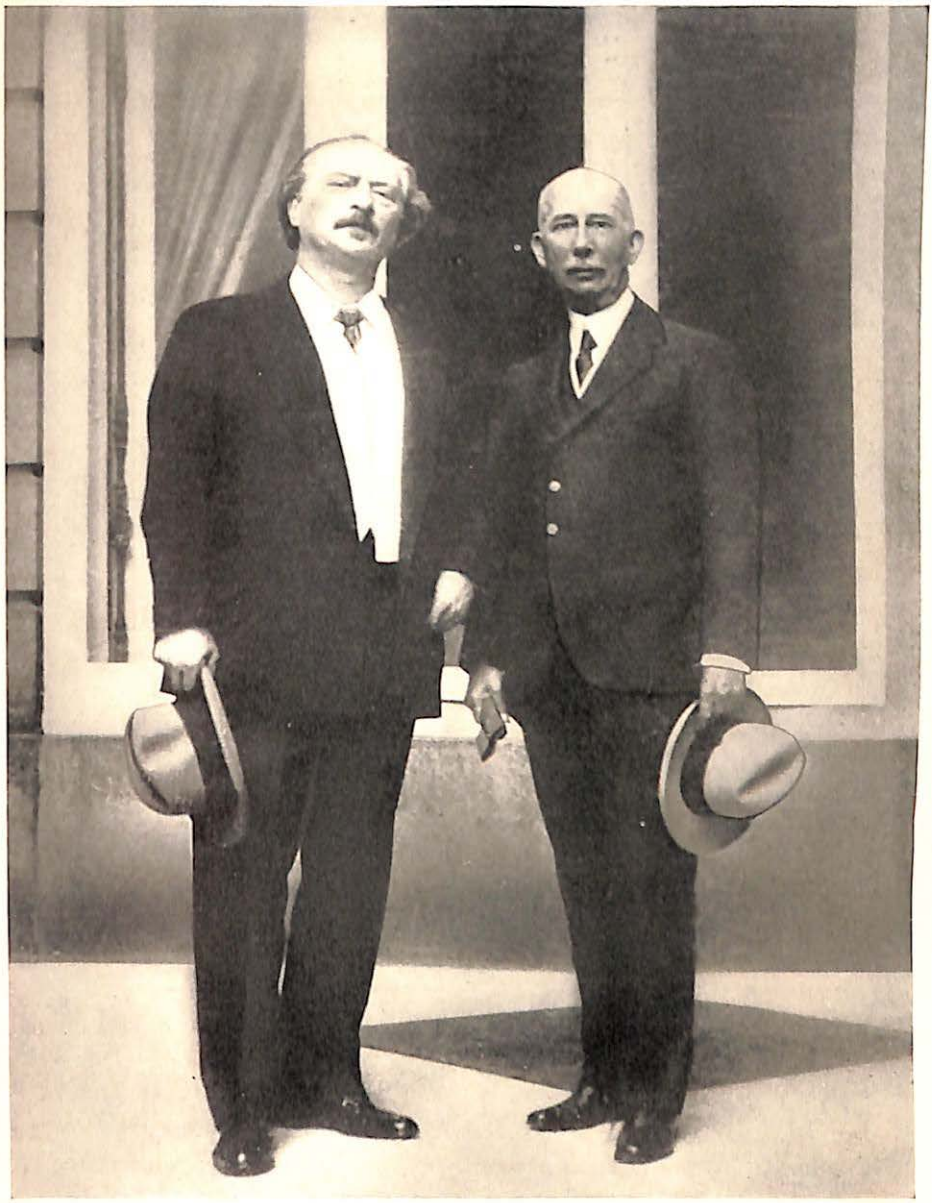
WARSAW, *January* 12, 1919

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

I have telegraphed you several times, but evidently not one of my messages has reached you.

The American Food Commission is going to leave Warsaw to-night. My time is very limited and, to my deepest regret, I shall not be able to fully describe you the situation which is simply tragic. Mr. J. M. Horodyski will give you the details. I wish, however, to add a few remarks to his verbal report, which will be, I am sure, very exact.

Contrary to the rumors originated by the retiring pro-German propaganda the Poles have been nowhere the aggressive party. Though claiming, most legitimately, . . . Dantzig as an indispensable condition for their political, commercial, and economic life, they all rely with unshaken confidence on the results of the Peace Conference and do not intend to surprise the delegates by any 'fait accompli.' But could anybody ask them to remain quiet when brutally attacked and not to defend themselves? Surprised by the murderous Ukrainian Bolshevik army the women and children of Lemberg took up arms and defended the city. At the present moment a force of about 80,000 Ukrainians, armed and equipped by the Germans, led by German and Austrian officers under the command of an Austrian Archduke Wilhelm of Hapsburg, is at the gate of Lemberg and the number of Polish soldiers, lacking food and munitions, does not exceed 18,000 men. In Posen, the day after my arrival, during the procession of 10,000 school children marching through the streets, some Prussian companies, mostly officers, opened fire upon the peaceful and unarmed crowd. Quite a number of shots were fired at my windows, some of them at the window of Colonel Wade. Explosive and dum-dum bullets were used. American and British flags were insulted. Several eye-witnesses, including the officers of the British Mission and myself, can testify to these facts.



PADEREWSKI AND COLONEL HOUSE

There is no doubt that the whole affair was organized by the Germans in order to create some new difficulties for the Peace Conference. There is also not the slightest doubt that the present Spartacus movement in Germany and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia are most closely connected. They simply intend to meet on our soil.

The Bolshevik army has already taken Vilna. The cities of Grodno and Biolystok are in immediate danger. In a few days the invasion of this part of Poland will be an accomplished fact.

Poland cannot defend itself. We have no food, no uniforms, no arms, no munitions. We have but men, at best 500,000 of them, willing to fight, to defend the country under a strong Government. The present Government is weak and dangerous, it is almost exclusively radical-socialist.

I have been asked to form a new cabinet, but what could I do with the moral support of the country alone, without the material assistance of the Allies and the United States?

If there were any possibility of obtaining immediate help for my country I would suggest:

(1) To send a collective note to the Ukrainian Directorate at Kief, addressed to Messrs. Petlura, Winnitchenko, and Schwetz, ordering cessation of hostilities in Eastern Galicia and evacuation of the district of Boryslaw, where considerable American, English, and French interests are endangered.

(2) To send an interallied military Commission to Warsaw in order to examine the situation and prescribe the means of assistance.

(3) To send as soon as possible some artillery and plenty of German rifle-munitions.

If this action is delayed our entire civilization may cease to exist. The war may only result in the establishment of barbarism all over Europe.

Kindly forgive this chaotic writing.

With very kindest regards I beg to remain most gratefully and sincerely yours,

I. J. PADEREWSKI

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January* 21, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose a copy of a letter that has just been brought me by hand from Paderewski in Warsaw. I think that his requests are moderate and I believe that you should urge the Allied Governments to accede to his wishes.

Now that Paderewski has formed a Government in Poland which is apparently being supported by Pilsudski and the other more prominent leaders, I suggest that you, on behalf of the United States, immediately recognize this Government as a *de facto* Government. I believe that we should take the lead in this matter. The British are certain to follow us, inasmuch as they sent Paderewski to Dantzig on a British warship.

If the Allied Governments and the United States agree to the sending of arms and ammunition and military supplies to Poland, I suggest that you request General Pershing to put this matter, so far as the United States is concerned, in the hands of one of his competent officers.[1]

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

During President Wilson's visits to England and Italy,

[1] On January 29 the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference listened to a presentation of Poland's case by M. Dmowski, who with M. Paderewski was accepted as Polish delegate to the Peace Conference. The Council appointed an interallied mission to Poland to investigate and report on the situation. It also arranged for the transport across Germany of General Haller's Polish army in France. Thus reënforced the Poles defeated the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, which Poland was later authorized to occupy.

House at the President's request continued preparations for the procedure of the Peace Conference. He discussed the question with M. Tardieu, who was recognized as Clemenceau's chief agent, and with Mr. Balfour. He had frequent interviews with Mr. Wickham Steed, whose articles in the *Daily Mail* were of the first importance, not merely because of Steed's knowledge of Continental politics, but because they had behind them the power of the Northcliffe press. Both Steed and Northcliffe believed that the League of Nations must be the central point of the peace settlement. House approved Steed's plan of getting the League to work at once, on the basis of interallied institutions already in operation; he believed that under the supervision of the secretariat they would render in time of peace a service to humanity which would solidify the League and make it capable of preventing war. He agreed that the Covenant of the League should be simple, for its life and success would depend largely upon the spirit that lay behind it, rather than upon its machinery or the wording of its constitution. He further approved of the principle of studying the problems of the peace through expert committees, which was characteristic of Steed's plan.

'The only merit of this plan,' wrote Steed, 'was its simplicity. Its defect was that it took no account of the personal ambitions and vanities of statesmen. It was, broadly, that oratory should be barred from the outset by a self-denying ordinance; that assent to the establishment of a league of nations should be the first point on the agenda of the Conference; that this assent having been secured, a nucleus for a league of nations should at once be formed out of the various inter-allied bodies that had grown up during the war — such as the Maritime Transport Council, the Wheat Executive, and the other organizations composed of men who had already acquired the habit of working internationally for a

common purpose; that some political advisers and international jurists of repute should be associated with them; and that to the body thus formed all questions not susceptible of immediate solution should be referred for impartial study and treatment. It was essential, I thought, that a league of nations should grow rather than be 'made'; that the Peace Conference should plant an acorn instead of trying to create a full-grown oak; and that, within a certain frame-work to be established from the beginning, the Covenant or Constitution of the League should be developed in the light of experience, not drafted in advance by theorists. The plan provided also for the immediate appointment of expert committees upon the principal questions of the Peace Settlement, these committees being instructed to report by definite dates to the heads of the Allied and Associated Governments, and to cast the gist of their reports into the form of articles of a Peace Treaty. The heads of Governments would take no part in the work of the expert committees, but would sit as a supreme tribunal for the decision of controverted points, settling them in accordance with the terms of the Armistice and with the declared war aims of the Allies. When this had been done, the Treaty should be communicated to the ex-enemy Governments and signed, the settlement of the outstanding questions, under examination by the embryonic League of Nations, being reserved for annexes to the main Treaty.

'Colonel House asked me further to adumbrate ideal solutions of the most urgent peace problems; and I found his views very like my own.' [1]

Mr. Steed's plan, indeed, was not far from House's idea of a quick preliminary treaty. But the Colonel recognized the necessity of reaching early agreement upon certain principles of the settlement which could not be postponed for later

[1] H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 264–65.

decision by the League, especially reparations, French security, and Italian aspirations in the Adriatic.

House insisted that Germany could be asked to pay as much, and only as much as was stated in the pre-Armistice Agreement: compensation 'for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.' As a practical matter he believed it useless to attempt to evaluate that damage. It was certain to be more than Germany could pay without destroying the economic organization of Europe and fostering German trade at the expense of the Allies themselves. The world would gain by an immediate payment by Germany of her quick assets, and he advocated a recognition of this fact by the Conference. If the Allies would agree to the sum which their bankers believed Germany could pay, it would then be to American advantage to agree to a scaling down of war debts; not because there was any moral obligation upon the United States, but on the principle that it is a wise business maxim to write off losses which cannot be made good. It would further be necessary to persuade the French that national security could be as well provided by the League of Nations, which would permit them to demobilize and avoid the expense of a large army, as by annexations which would drain their treasury at the moment they needed all their resources for the rehabilitation of the devastated districts. As for the Italian claims, everything would depend upon the success with which Wilson could urge the contention that the validity of the secret treaties had been superseded by the pre-Armistice Agreement, which accepted the principles of the Fourteen Points.

Upon the economic and financial aspects of the settlement, House had long conferences with the experts of the United States delegation and with many Europeans.

'*January* 4, 1919: Hoover and I,' he wrote in his diary, 'had a long talk upon the food situation and upon the situation in general. He takes, as usual, a gloomy outlook and I must confess that things do not seem cheerful. There is every evidence that the Allies have a growing intention not to repay us the money we have loaned them. One hears the argument, both in France and England, that we ought to pay our full share of the Allies' war debt; that we ought to have come in sooner, and that their fight was our fight. I for one have never admitted this. I have always felt that the United States was amply able to take care of herself; that we were never afraid of the Germans, and would not have been afraid of them even if France and England had gone under. We would have had a serious time, I admit, and there would have been a war in all human probability; but that we ever feared that they could defeat us or dominate us, has never seemed to me probable.

'*January* 6, 1919: I suggested to my colleagues this morning that the finance and economic questions would meet us at every turn and that we might as well face them and have a show-down with our associates of the Allied Governments. In looking over General McKinstry's report of the investigation which he is making, . . . it seemed to me that we were going at the matter backward. If we go along the lines which the French, Belgian, and other Allied Governments are pursuing, Germany, I thought, could not sign a peace which left the amount of her obligations in doubt, to be determined as the future developed the amount of reparations to be paid. It would not be satisfactory to Germany and it would not be satisfactory to us. Germany could not put herself in a financial condition to pay an indefinite obligation. It therefore seemed the course of wisdom to ascertain how much Germany could pay within a reasonable time and then let the Allies settle between themselves what proportion of this sum each should receive. My colleagues agreed.

'I then suggested that we give a lunch early next week to which we might invite the French, English, and Italians, including their Ministers of Finance, for the purpose of having a frank discussion of this question of reparation and finance. We have to meet the growing demand of the Allies that the United States not only cancel the sums which they owe us, but help them pay their own debts. . . .

'During the war the people were quite willing to pay excessive taxation. It was a matter of self-preservation. Then, too, the scale of remuneration was high. There is quite a different story to tell to-day, and if England, France, and Italy undertake to tax their people sufficiently to meet their national budgets, it will of course include the interest charges on their national debts. I am sure the devil will be to pay. I want to treat the matter sympathetically and generously, but I do not want to see the United States forced into an impossible and unsatisfactory position.

'*January* 7, 1919: Clemenceau and the President [1] both sent word they would call on me at five. The President came first to my reception room and met the other Commissioners. We had hardly begun our conversation before the Prime Minister arrived. I asked President Wilson and the Commissioners to excuse me and took Clemenceau into another room, where we had one of our heart-to-heart talks. I convinced him, I think, for the first time that a League of Nations was for the best interests of France. I called his attention to the fact that before the war Germany was a great military power, but that to the east of her there was Russia, also a great military power. To-day there was only one great military power on the Continent of Europe, and that was France. There was no balance of power as far as the Continent was concerned, because Russia had disappeared and both Germany and Austria had gone under. The thing that was apparent to me and to him must necessarily

[1] Just back from Italy.

be apparent to England. The English had always thrown their weight first in the one direction and then in the other, to establish an equilibrium. The English would not look with favor upon the present situation. . . .

'In the present war England voluntarily came to France's aid. She was not compelled to do so. The United States did likewise without compulsion. I asked whether or not in the circumstances France would not feel safer if England and America were in a position where they would be compelled to come to the aid of France in the event another nation like Germany should try to crush her. Under the old plan, the shadow and the specter of another war would haunt her. If she lost this chance which the United States offered through the League of Nations, it would never come again because there would never be another opportunity. Wilson was an idealist, but our people were not all of his mind. Wilson could force it through because, with all the brag and bluster of the Senate, they would not dare defeat a treaty made in agreement with the Allies and thereby continue alone the war with Germany or make a separate peace.

'The old Tiger seemed to see it all and became enthusiastic. He placed both hands on my shoulders and said, "You are right. I am for the League of Nations as you have it in mind and you may count upon me to work with you."

'We then took up the French economic problems and the real difficulties that confronted him. A great debt hung over the nation — a debt, the interest of which could only be paid by excessive taxation. Wages must necessarily go down after the war and taxation must necessarily go up. This would almost bring on a state of rebellion. Some plan ought to be formulated by which the delicate and dangerous situation might be met. Foolish suggestions were being made by Ribot and others, and I urged him to use his influence to

check such schemes.[1] They were doing harm to France and would eventually prejudice the Americans against her.

'I hoped Clemenceau would pardon me for bringing up the internal affairs of France with which we were only indirectly concerned. The old man replied, "I think of you as a brother and I want you to tell me everything that is in your mind, and we will work together just as if we were parts of the same Government." In this spirit there could be no differences between France and the United States.

'A very long talk with the President to-day, over the private telephone before he came to call, and I gave him pretty much of a résumé of what had happened since he left Paris. He told me of his Italian trip, with which he was well pleased. John Carty has arranged a private wire between the President's study and mine; there is also a telephone at my bedside that connects with this wire. There is no intermediary. He rings and I answer, and *vice versa*. The wire is constantly "covered" to see that it is not tapped.'

IV

The great fault of the political leaders who began to gather at Paris at the beginning of the second week of January, 1919, was their failure to draft a plan of procedure. Such a fault was, perhaps, to be expected, for they were not men primarily gifted with a talent for organization. The Allied victory was due to Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson in quite as real a sense as it was the result of the genius of military leaders; but their contribution had been that of popular leadership and not of administrative capacity.

It was true that very careful plans had been drafted for the systematic procedure of the Peace Conference, any one of which would have enormously facilitated its progress.

[1] Referring to the demand that the United States cancel war debts at the same time that France exact excessive reparations and annex the left bank of the Rhine.

The best-known of these plans was that drafted under the supervision of Tardieu, which Ambassador Jusserand sent to President Wilson for study on the *George Washington*.[1] This programme was logically arranged and, if it had been carried out, would probably have expedited the work of the Conference. Furthermore, it contained the all-important implication that the peace must be based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, the importance of which Wilson himself did not seem to appreciate. It directly and specifically referred back to the various Fourteen Points the topics to be considered, and it embodied the American doctrine that Germany could be called upon for reparations only to the extent of the direct damage resulting from German attack. 'Outside of the torpedoing from which the British fleet mainly suffered,' the text of the French plan stated, 'Belgium and France alone are entitled to indemnities on account of the systematic devastation suffered by them.' If this had been accepted at the outset, all the later controversy over the introduction of indirect war costs and pensions into the reparation clauses of the Treaty would have been avoided.

Colonel House kept in close touch with Tardieu's plans and in general sympathized with them. The one point of anxiety in his mind concerned the emphasis to be given the League of Nations, since the French were generally supposed to be indifferent or opposed to the inclusion of the Covenant in the Treaty. On this point Tardieu assured House that no difficulties need arise. On January 8, House wrote in his diary: 'Tardieu came to talk about the method of procedure which is to be taken up in the meeting on Sunday. We came to an agreement regarding the place which the League of Nations is to take in the order of procedure.'

But the heads of Government did not approve, or at least

[1] Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 56–63. The plan was revised and put into synoptic form in January. See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 88.

did not set in motion, any systematic approach to the problems of the Conference. Tardieu attributes this indifference to the Anglo-Saxon temperament. 'The variety of subjects,' he writes, 'calling for the attention of the heads of the delegations and the instinctive repugnance of the Anglo-Saxons to the systematized constructions of the Latin mind prevented the adoption of our proposal which only partially served to direct the order of work. The Conference created its various organizations one after the other instead of building them all up beforehand.' [1] Wickham Steed was of the opinion that if House had kept his health, he would have been able to assist materially in working out an organization. 'One serious misfortune — which proved to be a disaster,' he wrote, 'befell the Conference through the illness of Colonel House. A severe attack of influenza incapacitated him for any work during this critical formative period. Consequently, his guiding influence was absent when it was most sorely needed, and, before he could resume his activities, things had gone too far for him to mend.' [2]

House's illness lasted nearly a fortnight and was sufficiently grave as to give rise to rumors of his death; he had the interesting experience of reading his own obituary notices and eulogies. During this fortnight, the first plenary session of the Peace Conference was called on January 18. The Premiers and Foreign Ministers of the five Principal Powers, meeting as the Supreme Council, constituted what came to be called the Council of Ten. They acted as a board of review for various issues relating both to executive action in various parts of Europe and also to the settlement itself. They listened to the claims of the smaller nations, often not

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 91.

Mr. Baker attributes the opposition of Wilson to the French plan to his fear that it would sidetrack the League. The theory is unconvincing, since Tardieu agreed with House that the League should be the first item to be considered.

[2] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 266.

very well understood by them. Something of time and prestige was squandered in these sessions. 'It soon became known,' wrote Steed, 'that they had blundered and, still worse, the various deputations whom they examined collectively became witnesses to the Council's ignorance.... Since the "big men" were engaged, from the start, in the rough and tumble of the discussions, there remained nothing in reserve for the decision of controverted points, and those who ought to have been the ultimate judges wore out their strength and their influence in wrangling over details.' [1]

To House, still in bed, the President and others who watched the Council of Ten at work brought word of the situation. On January 21 he wrote in his diary, 'Unless something is done to pull the delegates together and to get them down to work, as last year,[2] I am afraid the sessions will be interminable.' And on the following day: 'The President came to see me to-day to tell of what was going on in the meeting at the Quai d'Orsay. As far as I can see they are not getting anywhere, largely because of the lack of organization.' On the same day Wiseman wrote in a diary memorandum: 'Saw House. We discussed the slow pace at which the Conference is going and agreed that it was absolutely necessary to appoint Committees to deal with various subjects. House asked me to draft a note for him on this subject. I suggested consulting Tyrrell, and he agreed.'

Wilson himself chafed even more under the delays that resulted from the hearings of the Council of Ten. Coming out of Pichon's study in the Quai d'Orsay one afternoon, where he left the Council at its deliberations, he expressed to two American technical advisers his impatience with the futility of listening day after day to complicated claims. 'Why don't you get together with the other experts,' he said,

[1] Steed, *op. cit.*, II, 270.

[2] Presumably referring to the Interallied Conference of November–December, 1917.

'and put in a joint recommendation as to boundaries? The Council will approve anything you agree upon.' The suggestion was exactly in line with the discussion of Wiseman and House. The President repeated to House his desire to organize committees for special study, and in a few days the process was inaugurated.

'*January* 30, 1919: I sent for Sir William Tyrrell,' wrote House in his diary, 'in accordance with the understanding I had with the President last night regarding the united report which we desire the British and American technical advisers to make concerning boundary questions. I put Tyrrell in touch with Mezes and urged them to facilitate the matter as much as possible.'

Obviously it was unwise to restrict the special work to an informal and self-constituted committee. On February 1, the Supreme Council referred the question of Rumanian boundaries to a committee of specialists representing the United States, the British Empire, France, and Italy. Within a few days they created similar committees for the study of Polish and Czecho-Slovak boundaries.

Colonel House noted in his diary accordingly, on February 6, that 'the general Peace Conference is going better and things are being done.' Steps were also taken to hasten the organization of a council to handle the administrative problems of an economic character. On January 30, House met with the American economic specialists, who drafted a programme designed to relieve the Supreme Council from the time-consuming discussion of executive action demanded by the economic state of Europe; for the Peace Conference had been compelled to undertake not merely peace making but executive functions.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *February* 7, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose a copy of proposals, which, if they meet with your approval, your economic advisers, Admiral Benson, Baruch, McCormick, Davis, and Hoover, suggest should be submitted by you on behalf of the United States at the meeting of the Supreme War Council this afternoon.

There will probably be opposition to those suggestions at the meeting. I have asked our economic experts to be in attendance so that you can call upon them when these matters come up for discussion.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

These proposals were passed the next day by the Supreme Council in the following form, upon President Wilson's motion:

'i. Under present conditions many questions not primarily of military character which are arising daily and which are bound to become of increasing importance as time passes should be dealt with on behalf of the United States and the Allies by civilian representatives of these countries experienced in such questions as finance, food, blockade control, shipping, and raw materials.

'ii. To accomplish this there shall be constituted at Paris a Supreme Economic Council to deal with such matters for the period of the Armistice. The Council shall absorb or replace such other existing interallied bodies and their powers as it may determine from time to time. The Economic Council shall consist of not more than five representatives of each interested Government.

'iii. There shall be added to the present International

Permanent Armistice Commission two civilian representatives of each Government, who shall consult with the Allied High Command, but who may report direct to the Supreme Economic Council.'

Colonel House to the President

[Memorandum]

PARIS, *February* 13, 1919

Last Saturday the Supreme War Council set up the 'Supreme Economic Council' to deal with questions of Finance, Food, Blockade Control, Shipping, and Raw Materials.

Our representatives here in Europe dealing with these matters are the following:

1. Finance — Norman H. Davis;
2. Food — Herbert Hoover;
3. Blockade Control — Vance C. McCormick;
4. Shipping — Edward N. Hurley; in his absence, Mr. [Henry M.] Robinson;
5. Raw Materials — Bernard M. Baruch.

I suggest that you designate these gentlemen to represent the United States on the Supreme Economic Council, each to be chairman of that particular branch of the work of the Council which he represents.[1]

E. M. H.

Thus the organization of the Peace Conference developed. The Supreme Council was relieved of much of its executive

[1] President Wilson accepted these recommendations and House notified the experts involved. As it developed, the chairmanships of the Shipping and Raw Materials Sections were assigned to Mr. Kemball Cooke, of Great Britain, and M. Loucheur, of France, instead of to Mr. Hurley and Mr. Baruch. A Communications Section was added under the chairmanship of General Mance of Great Britain, and a Section on Urgent Business under the chairmanship of Mr. Baruch. Three of the chairmanships went to the United States in accordance with the above memorandum of House.

labor. Territorial problems were placed in the hands of the special committees. Other committees were at work upon reparations, international labor legislation, international control of ports, waterways, and railways, upon military, naval, and aerial questions. Of all the committees, that upon which the President naturally laid chief stress was the Committee on the League of Nations. The circumstances that led to its creation and the character of its work deserve especial study.

CHAPTER IX

DRAFTING THE COVENANT[1]

It was impossible to listen to the document which President Wilson read . . . without feeling that the affairs of the world were being lifted into new dimensions.

Mr. H. Wickham Steed in the Paris 'Daily Mail,' February 15, 1919

I

FROM the moment of his arrival in Europe, President Wilson made plain his conviction that the League of Nations must be the central issue of the Peace Conference. The creation of a League, in his opinion, would be the distinctive achievement differentiating this peace settlement from those of the past, which had invariably resulted in nationalistic rivalry and war. No matter how satisfactory the peace treaties might be in their territorial and economic aspects, Wilson insisted that they would be futile for the preservation of future peace unless they provided for a League.

While still on the *George Washington*, then approaching the shores of France, President Wilson one morning discussed the coming Conference and the League of Nations with a group of American economic and territorial experts. The gist of his views and some of his actual expressions were set down by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, executive officer of the Inquiry. In view of the fact that Wilson made no public statement on these questions before the Peace Conference, Dr. Bowman's notes are obviously of the first historical importance.

[1] This chapter does not attempt to cover the topic chosen as the chapter heading, except from the point of view of House's papers. I am greatly indebted for essential information and clarification of the subject to Mr. David Hunter Miller, whose comprehensive knowledge of this particular matter probably exceeds that of any living student or participant. His *The Drafting of the Covenant* (2 vols., Putnam, 1928) is a mine of authoritative information on the subject.

Bowman Memorandum on Conference with President Wilson [1]

December 10, 1918

After a few introductory remarks to the effect that he was glad to meet us, and that he welcomed the suggestion of a conference to give his views on the impending Peace Conference, the President remarked that *we would be the only disinterested people* at the Peace Conference, and that *the men whom we were about to deal with did not represent their own people. . . .*

The President pointed out that this was *the first conference in which decisions depended upon the opinion of mankind*, not upon the previous determinations and diplomatic schemes of the assembled representatives. With great earnestness he re-emphasized the point that unless the Conference was prepared to follow the opinions of mankind and to express the will of the people rather than that of their leaders at the Conference, we should soon be involved in *another breakup of the world, and when such a breakup came it would not be a war but a cataclysm.*

He spoke of the League to Enforce Peace, of the possibility of an international court with international police, etc., but added that such a plan could hardly be worked out in view of the fact that there was *to be only one conference* and it would be difficult to reach agreements respecting such matters; and he placed in opposition to this view of the work of the Conference and of the project of a *League of Nations, the idea of covenants*, that is, agreements, pledges, etc., such as could be worked out in *general form* and agreed to and set in motion, and he particularly emphasized the importance of relying on *experience to guide subsequent action.*

As for the League of Nations, it implied political independence and *territorial integrity plus later alteration of terms and*

[1] I am greatly indebted to Dr. Bowman for his kind permission to print these excerpts from his notes. The italics are in the original notes.

alteration of boundaries if it could be shown that injustice had been done or that conditions had changed. And such alteration would be the easier to make in time as *passion subsided* and matters could be viewed in the light of justice rather than in the light of a peace conference at the close of a protracted war. He illustrated his point by the workings of the *Monroe Doctrine*, saying that what it had done for the western world the League of Nations would do for the rest of the world; and just as the Monroe Doctrine had developed in time to meet changing conditions, so would the League of Nations develop. In fact, he could not see how a treaty of peace could be drawn up or how both *elasticity and security could be obtained save under a League of Nations;* the opposite of such a course was to maintain the idea of the *Great Powers and of balance of power*, and such an idea *had always produced* only '*aggression and selfishness and war*'; the *people* are *heartily sick of such a course* and want the Peace Conference and the Powers to take an *entirely new course of action.*

He then turned to some specific questions and mentioned the fact that *England herself was against further extension of the British Empire.*

He thought that *some capital, as The Hague or Berne,* would *be selected for the League of Nations,* and that there would be organized in the place chosen a *Council of the League* whose members should be *the best men that could be found.* Whenever trouble arose it could be *called to the attention of the Council* and would be *given* thereby *the widest publicity.* In cases involving *discipline* there *was* the *alternative to war*, namely, the *boycott; trade*, including *postal and cable facilities*, could be *denied a state* that had been *guilty of wrong-doing.* Under this plan no *nation* would be *permitted to be an outlaw*, free to work out its evil designs *against a neighbor* or the world.

He thought that the *German colonies* should be *declared* the *common property* of the *League of Nations and adminis-*

tered by small nations. The *resources* of each colony should be *available to all members of the League*, and in this and other matters involving international relations or German colonies or resources or territorial arrangements, the *world* would be *intolerable if only arrangement ensues;* that *this* is a *peace conference in which arrangements cannot be made in the old style.* Anticipating the difficulties of the Conference in view of the suggestion he had made respecting the desire of the people of the world for a new order, he remarked, '*If it won't work, it must be made to work*,' because the world was faced by a task of terrible proportions and only the adoption of a cleansing process would recreate or regenerate the world. The *poison of Bolshevism* was *accepted readily* by the world because '*it is a protest against the way in which the world has worked.*' It was to be our business at the Peace Conference to fight for a new order, '*agreeably if we can, disagreeably if necessary.*'

We must *tell* the *United States the truth* about diplomacy, the Peace Conference, the world. He here referred to the *censorship*, saying that he had arranged in the face of opposition from Europe for the *free flow of news to the United States*, though he doubted if there would be a similarly free flow to the peoples of other European countries; after a considerable effort he had secured the *removal of French and English restrictions on political news.*[1] Thereupon he finished his reference to the frank conditions under which the Conference had to work and the necessity for getting the truth to the people by saying that *if* the *Conference did not settle things* on such a basis the Peace Treaty would not work, and 'if it doesn't work right *the world will raise Hell.*'

He stated that we should only go so far in *backing the claims of a given Power* as *justice required*, 'and not an inch farther,' and referred to a remodeled quotation from Burke: '*Only that government is free whose peoples regard themselves as free.*'

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 235.

The European *leaders* reminded one of the *episode in Philippopolis* — for the *space of two hours they cried, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians'* — to which the President appended in an aside, '*in the interest of the silversmiths.*'

The President concluded the conference by saying that he hoped to see us frequently, and while he expected us to work through the Commissioners according to the organization plans of the Conference, he wanted us in case of emergency not to hesitate to bring directly to his attention any matter whose decision was in any way critical; and concluded with a sentence that deserves immortality: '*Tell me what's right and I'll fight for it; give me a guaranteed position.*'

From these notes it is clear that the President came to Europe determined to fight if necessary for a new international order, and that he regarded the League as the necessary cornerstone of the coming international régime. Immediately upon reaching Paris he called Colonel House into conference for the purpose of discussing a revision of the draft Covenant which he had written in Washington the previous summer, and which was based primarily upon House's Magnolia draft.[1] Wilson still had in mind the mechanism for the League which he had planned five months before, operating through a Council made up of the Ambassadors or Ministers at the capital of one of the smaller Powers, Switzerland or Holland. The President had added one new and important idea to his plan; namely, the principle of mandates, according to which the League should become 'residuary trustee' for the inheritance of the Turkish and the German colonial empires, and should administer, primarily for the welfare of their inhabitants, the backward territories once belonging to those empires. The idea of a trusteeship for backward peoples was not new. It had been advocated by various writers on colonial problems, and a

[1] *Supra*, Volume IV, Chapter II.

year previous it was incorporated in a memorandum on Mesopotamia written for Colonel House's Inquiry by George Louis Beer and turned in on January 1, 1918, presumably in connection with the notes that House carried to President Wilson at the time of the formulation of the Fourteen Points.[1] This memorandum, according to J. T. Shotwell, 'happens to contain the first project for a "mandate" in the sense in which that term ultimately was used in the Treaty. At least no earlier formulation of the term in this technical sense in which it was finally adopted was known to Beer, then or later.' [2] The idea, if not the term, appears in the fifth of the Fourteen Points, although it was not incorporated by either Colonel House or the President in their first drafts of the Covenant.

In the interpretation of the Fourteen Points which House had prepared at the time of the pre-Armistice conversations, the principle of the mandate was developed in connection with Point V and the future of the Turkish Empire.[3] 'It would seem as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the security of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry. . . .'

This had been cabled by House to Wilson in October, and had evidently sunk into his mind as applicable to the Covenant of the League. Various writers have assumed [4] that the President took over the idea of mandates from General Smuts' famous pamphlet, after he reached Europe.

[1] Volume III, Chapter XI.

[2] *George Louis Beer* (Macmillan, 1924), 86.

[3] Doubtless Lippmann, who had been secretary of the Inquiry, and who with Cobb worked out the interpretation of the Fourteen Points, had taken it over from Beer.

[4] Among others, Mr. R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 224–25.

But this pamphlet was not published until December 16, and on December 10, while still on the *George Washington*, Wilson explained his hope that territories taken from the German colonial and the Turkish empires would become the property of the League. 'Nothing stabilizes an institution so well,' he said, 'as the possession of property.' He argued that those territories should be administered not by the Great Powers but by smaller States.[1] General Smuts, furthermore, had excluded the German colonies from the application of the system, proposing it for the 'territories formerly belonging to Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey.' It is noteworthy, however, that although the idea of mandates came to Wilson independently of the Smuts pamphlet, the language of the new articles covering mandates which the President planned to incorporate in his revised Covenant was taken almost verbatim from Smuts.

President Wilson planned several other additions and changes in his draft Covenant. On December 16 he took up with House the idea of an international labor organization, and asked him whether 'something could be done or said at the Peace Conference which would bring the hours of labor, throughout the world, to a maximum of eight out of the twenty-four. He said it was entirely irrelevant to a Peace Conference, but wondered if it could not be brought in.' This idea he later developed so as to provide for the creation of an international labor organization under League auspices. He also discussed with House the addition of an Executive Council, as a solution of the main difficulty of his earlier plans which left in a perpetual minority the Great Powers, upon whom the responsibility for maintaining the League would fall. The creation of a Council would give control to the Great Powers, although that control would be limited by the Body of Delegates. In a tentative draft of a Covenant,

[1] Notes taken by C. S., December 10, 1918. See also Dr. Bowman's Memorandum, 282.

presented to House on November 30, 1918, David Hunter Miller advanced the idea of a Council to be elected by the delegates for the settlement of each unadjusted dispute. General Smuts' plan, published on December 16, provided for a permanent council to act as the 'executive committee of the league' as well as to report upon the adjustment of disputes. This Wilson took over practically unchanged.

Two other additions were made by Wilson, for which he was indebted neither to House's Inquiry nor to General Smuts. One was an article requiring new states to accord equality of treatment to all racial and religious minorities within their several jurisdictions. The other provided a clause declaring it the 'friendly right' of each of the signatory nations to draw the 'attention of the Body of Delegates to any circumstances anywhere which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.' This was eminently characteristic of Wilson's understanding of the spirit of the League, and he later described Article XI of the final Covenant, which expressed the sense of this clause, as his 'favorite article.' On the *George Washington* he emphasized his hope that the future international community would permit any nation to 'butt in' (the expression was his) when trouble threatened. There should be no more 'private fights,' he contended.[1]

With such changes and additions in his mind, President Wilson, after his return from Italy, hastily rewrote his Washington draft of the Covenant. On January 8, he invited House to dinner in order to discuss his revision. The new document, which for convenience may be termed the first Paris draft, although it incorporated much of his Washington draft as well as of the House Magnolia draft, included the changes which the President had gone over with House. It also included a change which House did not approve;

[1] Notes taken by C. S. December 10, 1918.

namely, the omission of any provision for compulsory arbitration. In this respect as in others, the influence of General Smuts was evident, as well as that of the Phillimore plan which by this time Wilson had studied carefully. At their dinner on January 8, the President agreed with House that the latter should discuss the new draft with the British. 'It is much improved over the Magnolia draft,' wrote House in his diary.

The President authorized him to take the new draft to Lord Robert Cecil, who had charge of League of Nations questions for the British, in the hope of harmonizing all differences between it and the British plan, so as to produce a joint Anglo-American draft. On January 9, however, House fell ill, and for nearly a fortnight he was unable to carry on negotiations. This work was taken up, at House's suggestion, by David Hunter Miller, who thereafter kept in close touch with the British and whose influence upon the language of the Covenant became of increasing importance. With comments and criticism by Lansing, Bliss, and Miller before him, President Wilson set to work upon a new revision, which was completed by January 20. This was his second Paris draft.[1]

In the mean time the British draft was completed and sent to Colonel House, who on January 19 forwarded a copy to the President. He found that the British plan did not include representatives of the smaller Powers on the Council of the League, nor did it provide for a system of mandates; it did include a permanent international court of justice, which Wilson still excluded, and it provided for separate representation for the British Dominions and India. Neither Wilson's second Paris draft nor the British draft provided for any plan of compulsory arbitration which might lead to a definition of acts of aggression. 'House thinks,' wrote Wise-

[1] This is the draft which was presented to the Senate as Wilson's original draft of the Covenant.

man on January 19, 'that both the President and Cecil have failed in their draft schemes by not insisting upon compulsory arbitration.'

II

With the exception of the problem of mandates, the second Paris draft of President Wilson and the British draft were so far similar as to make possible the close coöperation of the British and American experts in the drafting of the Covenant by the Peace Conference itself Before the end of January, Colonel House himself had recovered and thereafter kept in close personal touch with Lord Robert Cecil.

The question as to whether or not the Covenant should be included in the general Treaty of Peace was not decided until January 25. Sir William Wiseman, who had been selected as liaison officer between the British and Americans and who acted as adviser to Colonel House on British relations, recorded in his diary many informal conferences at House's rooms in the Crillon, whither Cecil and Smuts came to discuss the League. There they considered the arguments, which finally prevailed, that were likely to persuade the European leaders that the Covenant should be an integral part of the Treaty. Neither Lloyd George nor Clemenceau apparently cared greatly; the latter was especially indifferent, for he had no confidence in the ultimate value of the League and his mind was concentrated upon the problems of security and reparations, which he regarded as of more immediate importance for France. But President Wilson was unalterably determined that the Covenant should be an integral part of the Treaty and he had the support of Lord Robert Cecil. Wilson agreed with House that at the second plenary session of the Peace Conference the endorsement of the League should be secured by the passage of resolutions and thereafter the work of drafting the Covenant entrusted to a committee which should begin its task at once. Lord Robert had already prepared resolutions to this effect.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January* 19, 1919

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I suggest that at your conference with Lord Robert Cecil this evening, you take the opportunity of ascertaining from him his views as to the form and substance of the resolution to be adopted by the Conference for referring to a committee the preparation of the Covenant dealing with the League of Nations.

I regard this resolution as of great importance. It should be drawn so as to secure the acceptance with the least possible discussion of what we deem vital. Points which may give rise to controversy should be left to the Committee to discuss.

The resolution when adopted should be made public as the solemn declaration of the Conference. The world is waiting for an announcement on this subject and we should not wish the matter to be referred except under a resolution containing substantially the following declarations. Commitments should not be difficult and I will undertake to secure these if you so desire.

(1) It is essential to the maintenance of the world peace, which the Associated Nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created at the Conference with a permanent organization and regular meetings of the members.

(2) The League of Nations should promote the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments and the maintenance of justice and the scrupulous respect for all international obligations in dealings of organized peoples with one another.

(3) The League of Nations should provide for open diplomacy by the prompt and complete publication of all International Agreements.[1]

[1] According to a memorandum of Wiseman, the above letter was drafted by himself, Miller, and Auchincloss. He added: 'House suggested

I am sending you herewith confidentially a copy of draft of Treaty [Covenant of League] prepared by Lord Robert Cecil, which was handed me by Sir William Wiseman. I have marked clauses which I think are of special interest.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

As a result of his conference with Cecil, President Wilson approved the resolutions already drafted by the British, which were more definite than those contained in House's letter, although they carried the same implication of the necessity for an immediate creation of a League as part of the general peace. After discussion in the Supreme Council on January 21, these resolutions were endorsed by the Council on the following day, with slight verbal changes and additions suggested by the President. It was assumed that in presenting them to the plenary session Wilson would discuss the whole problem of the League.

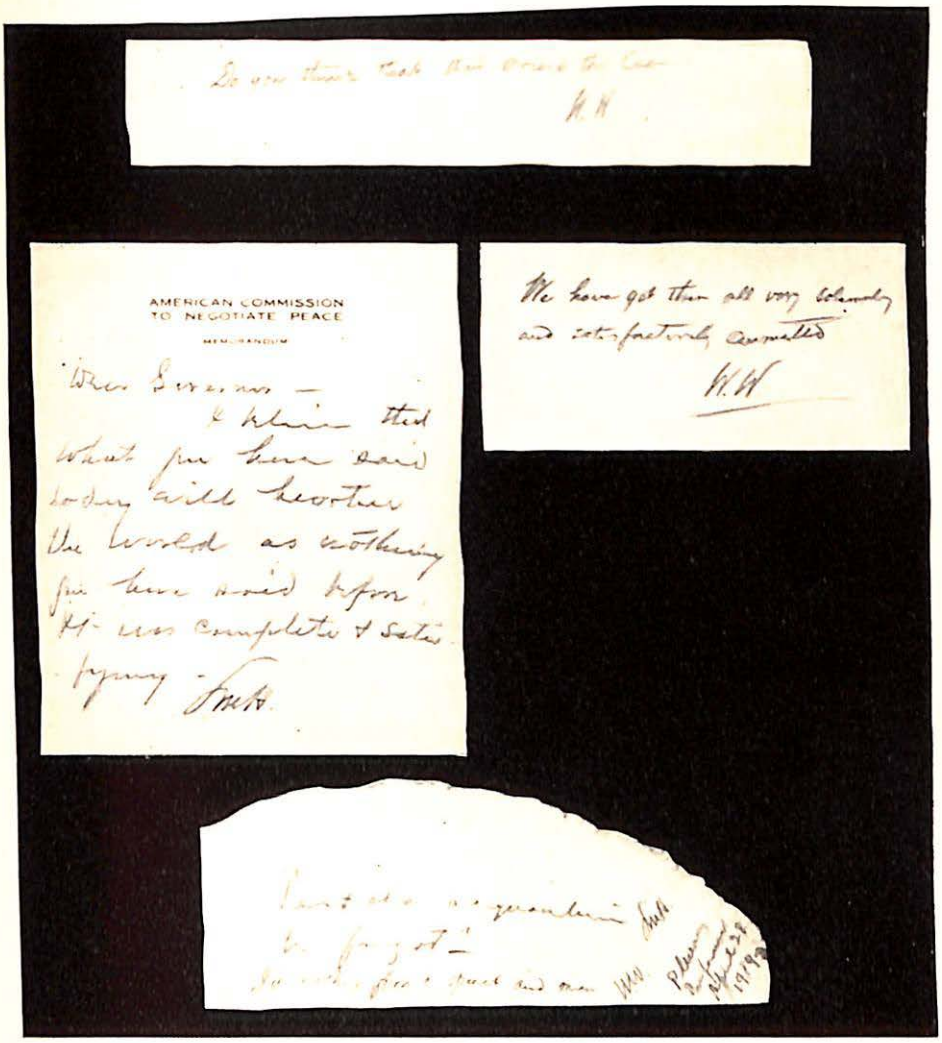
On January 25, the Peace Conference convened to listen to the President's presentation of the case for the League. Without any opposition, the resolutions suggested by the British, as amended by Wilson, and endorsed by the Council, were approved as follows:

Peace Conference Resolutions on League of Nations

PARIS, *January* 25, 1919

'1. It is essential to the maintenance of the world settlement, which the Associated Nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created to promote international coöperation, to ensure the fulfillment of accepted international obligations, and to provide safeguards against war.

that some one ought to spring on the Conference a proposal that they should bind themselves not to engage again in a world war. It would be interesting to see the man who would first dare to oppose that.'



NOTES EXCHANGED BY WILSON AND HOUSE AT PLENARY SESSIONS OF JANUARY 25, 1919, AND APRIL 28, 1919

'2. This League should be created [1] as an integral part of the general Treaty of Peace, and should be open to every civilized nation which can be relied on to promote its objects.

'3. The members of the League should periodically meet in international conference, and should have a permanent organization and secretariat to carry on the business of the League in the intervals between the conferences.

'The Conference therefore appoints a Committee representative of the Associated Governments to work out the details of the constitution and functions of the League.' [2]

[1] In the Protocol of the Plenary Session and in the minutes of the Commission this word is printed 'treated' and has been reprinted generally as such. Mr. David Hunter Miller has called attention to what must have been a typographical error, as 'created' was, in his opinion, obviously intended. See Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 76.

[2] Mr. R. S. Baker reviews the circumstances precedent to the appointment of this committee and presents a dramatic picture of the alleged struggle between Wilson and the European opponents of the League who desired to prevent its creation. He assumes, as his chief evidence of 'sharp' strategical manœuvres on both sides, the purpose of the British 'to get the discussion of the League out of the Council and into the hands of a special committee.' President Wilson, according to his contention 'evidently expected that it would be discussed by the Council itself, and its principles, if not its details, worked out by the heads of States as the basis of the settlements.' (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 236.)

There is nothing in Colonel House's papers to indicate the existence of such an intrigue or that Wilson believed in it. There is much to show that the President himself desired a committee. Such a committee, so far from hindering the creation of a Covenant, was the only practical means of securing it. Colonel House's letter of January 19 to the President shows that House himself took the creation of such a committee for granted and also took for granted that Wilson favored it. A memorandum by Wiseman, written January 23, reads: 'In the afternoon saw House, who is anxious to push the League of Nations rapidly. He wants me to get either Cecil or Smuts to sound the Japanese, Italians, and French, and have them come into line with the President's proposal before the Committee meet.' Reference of the matter to a committee was not, as Mr. Baker argues, suggested by the enemies of the League for the purpose of side-tracking it, but was rather demanded by its friends as a means of facilitating its creation.

The *procès-verbal* of the Council of January 21 (referred to by Mr.

The formal sanction thus given by the Peace Conference to the principle of the League and the decision that it should be given a place as an integral part of the Treaty, was the first great triumph of Wilson at the Conference. It was the result of many informal conversations which had been carried on during the apparently fruitless weeks, when the Conference seemed to be accomplishing nothing. Without these discussions the principle of a League might have been long and perhaps uselessly debated in the open Conference or Council. The same was to be true of the details of the Covenant later drafted by the Committee. Agreement had already been reached in private conversations as to the salient

Baker himself) shows that the President believed he had already reached an agreement on principles: 'President Wilson then explained . . . that he had found his ideas in substantial accord with Mr. Bourgeois [France], General Smuts, and Lord Robert Cecil [Great Britain].' And the *procès-verbal* of the first meeting of the Committee shows that Wilson did not want to talk about principles and that he believed that the Conference would accept any well-devised plan drafted by the Committee. As a matter of fact, Wilson approved enthusiastically House's plan for drafting the Covenant in committee rather than in the Council, thus avoiding constant consultation with the heads of Governments. 'President Wilson states [the *procès-verbal* of February 3 reads] that if the delegates consulted with their Governments they would not arrive anywhere. There is no use consulting one's Government about each particular point. The duty of the delegates is to form a plan and to present it to their Governments.' In fact, it was Wilson himself who on January 22 suggested to the Council of Ten that 'an initial draft for the League of Nations be made by a commission appointed by the Great Powers.' 'Still more erroneous,' writes Mr. D. H. Miller (*op. cit.*, I, 82), 'is Baker's idea that there was something Machiavellian in the proposal "to get the discussion of the League out of the Council and into the hands of a special committee." The notion that the proposal of a Committee would tend to delay the Covenant is fantastic; the fact on the contrary was that without some sort of a Commission or Committee there would have been no Covenant at all. . . .'

Mr. Baker's thesis that the French endeavored to hamper the creation of a League is by no means supported by the papers of Sir William Wiseman, who reports Tardieu as anxious to see the Covenant completed as soon as possible. In a memorandum of January 23, Wiseman writes: 'Saw Tardieu at 10.30. He thinks the Conference is going too slowly, but is satisfactory in the sense that President Wilson will be able to return to the States and say that the League of Nations has been agreed upon.'

features of the Covenant before the Committee met, so that it proved possible in ten sittings to settle its form. Although this Covenant provided the merest 'scaffolding for the essentials of international action,' nevertheless it possessed the supreme merit of winning the approval of the Conference.

III

During the interval between the endorsement of the League's principles by the Peace Conference on January 25 and the first meeting of the Committee on February 3, strenuous efforts were made by the Americans and British especially interested in the fortunes of the League, to reach an agreement upon its outstanding features. The chief problem came in the discussion of mandates. President Wilson was enthusiastically in favor of his development of General Smuts' original plan. Although no one at Paris at any time urged the return of the German colonies, Wilson was definitely opposed to their outright annexation by the victorious nations. The British Colonial Premiers insisted that the German colonies conquered by them must be annexed. Hughes of Australia and Massey of New Zealand demanded the colonies south of the Equator as necessary protection for those Dominions, and even Smuts, the sponsor of the mandate principle, was slow to apply it to the German African colonies. 'The whole project,' says Lord Eustace Percy in the standard history of the Peace Conference, 'seemed in danger of splitting on the rock of South African and Australian nationalism.' [1] The Dominions were naturally supported by the French, whose claim to Syria was strongly pressed, and by the Japanese, who had an eye on the German colonies in the Pacific north of the Equator. If compelled to accept the mandate principle, they wished it applied so as to make possible virtual an-

[1] Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference at Paris*, II, 26.

nexation. Sir William Wiseman noted the issue in a memorandum of January 27.

Wiseman Memorandum

I attended a meeting in Colonel House's room, with Robert Cecil and Miller, to discuss the League of Nations. We found only two important points of difference between the British and American views. One was the Freedom of the Seas, which narrows down to a question of blockade. This they agreed to leave until they could each have the expert opinions of their sailors and international lawyers. The other question is that of the German colonies — South-West Africa and the Pacific Islands. House quite agrees that these should go to South Africa and Australia respectively, but objects to them being considered 'conquered territory.' He wants them to be handed over by the League of Nations to Australia and South Africa as mandatories. Cecil accepted this, and said he thought the Colonies would also, providing there was no question of cancelling the mandate. House argues that the League of Nations must reserve the right to cancel the mandate in cases of gross mismanagement, but says the President would agree that the peoples concerned should be able at any time to vote themselves part of Australia and South Africa, thereby cancelling the mandate.

I afterwards learned that, while this conversation was going on at the Hôtel Crillon, the very same matter was being discussed at the Quai d'Orsay, and George was taking a different view. He was supporting the Dominions' claim that these particular territories should be considered as conquered and part of the respective Colonies.

While Wilson fought for the principle of mandates in the Council, into which on January 24 and January 27 Lloyd

George introduced the Colonial Premiers, House sought in conferences with Cecil and Smuts to find a compromise. Ultimately an article drafted by Smuts, defining different types of mandates, proved the solution. House also made it his business to keep representatives of the neutral Powers in touch with the progress of discussions.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January* 27, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

President Ador of Switzerland called yesterday. He was much concerned about the neutral Governments not being represented upon the League of Nations. He is in favor of it, but believes that his people will not approve an organization in the formation of which they have had no part.

I suggested that the Great Powers might be willing to confer with neutral representatives unofficially and ask them to make any suggestions or criticisms as the formation of the League progressed. He was entirely satisfied with this.

If this is agreeable, I would be perfectly willing personally to keep in touch with the representatives of Switzerland, Poland, and Spain. Each delegate representing the Great Powers on the League of Nations might also keep in touch with three other neutral Governments. In this way there would be no hurt sensibilities and the cause would be very much strengthened.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*January* 27, 1919:[1] I had an interesting and valuable meeting with Lord Robert Cecil this afternoon,' wrote House in his diary, 'upon the subject of the League of Nations.

[1] This excerpt refers to the meeting described in the Wiseman Memorandum quoted above.

Sir William Wiseman and David Miller were present. Lord Robert and I practically differed not at all, and yet there were some strong points of difference between his draft and ours. This is because, so he tells me, he could not get his views adopted. We argued at considerable length, especially upon the question of the German colonies, and whether or not the mandatory principle should be applied to them. I contended for it strongly and he accepted it, but objected to the clause by which a colony could by applying to the League of Nations ask for a change of Mandatory Power. This he thought impractical and said the Dominions would not consent. I convinced him that it was best for Great Britain as a whole to take what we had proposed rather than what the Dominions proposed. The result I thought would be presumably the same and in the end the Mandatory Power would in a short time persuade the colony to annex itself.

'While we were discussing this particular feature, Lloyd George, the President, and the Prime Ministers of the Dominions were discussing the same question at the Quai d'Orsay but upon different lines. Lloyd George and the President finally had a private conference . . . . Balfour takes practically the same view that Lord Robert does, and which nearly agrees with my own.

'I urged Lord Robert to commit the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour to the Covenant of the League of Nations which he and I have so nearly agreed upon. When this is done, I promised to take it up with the President.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January* 28, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I believe the entire British delegation, including the other Dominion representatives, are opposed to Hughes in his claim for annexation as opposed to the mandatory system.

Either Hughes claims the Pacific Islands by right of conquest and as a reward for Australia's services in the war, or he must accept the mandatory of the League of Nations for the better government of the backward people of the Pacific Islands. It is doubtful if public opinion in Australia is really behind Hughes, and if he persists in his claim the best solution would be to tell him the whole arguments on both sides must be published in order that the world may judge Australia's claims, but so far as the Conference is concerned his proposal strikes at the whole idea of the League of Nations and cannot be accepted.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

'*January* 28, 1919: The President called me over the private wire at 9.30 and I have just had a twenty-minute talk with him. He is much disturbed at the turn of things this afternoon. The French and British are demanding that if the "mandatory" is used by the League of Nations as to the German colonies, it shall be used immediately and the different Powers designated now rather than later. The President asked my advice as to procedure. He had in mind to tell them that if they maintained their attitude he intended to give both sides to the public. In lieu of this I suggested that he tell them that he did not believe they voiced the opinion of the Conference as a whole, and that it was his purpose at the next general meeting to bring the matter before the Conference and ask for an opinion. My purpose in this is that, since proceedings of the General Conference are public, he will get exactly the same publicity as he would by the method he suggested and there could be no criticism by the Powers.[1]

[1] President Wilson did not follow this advice. The *procès-verbal* of the meeting of the Council on January 30 reads, that President Wilson protested that: 'It was stated that, as regards President Wilson's ideals, he (President Wilson) did not know how his ideals would work. If these

'*January* 29, 1919: General Smuts came to see me at 10.30 in order to see whether we could not get together on the colonies question. He had drafted a paper which he said Lloyd George and some of them approved, but which they had not offered Hughes and Massey. They did not want to present the paper unless they knew it was satisfactory to the President. When I read it I saw they had made great concessions from the position they took yesterday, and I told him that with a few slight verbal changes I was ready to accept it.

'Lloyd George "cut" the meeting at the Quai d'Orsay and waited for Smuts' return. They had their meeting with the Prime Ministers of the Colonies and succeeded in putting the resolution through. In the mean time, I had sent it to the Quai d'Orsay with a memorandum on the margin stating that I approved. . . .

'The President came to-night and had a meeting with the Commissioners, and among other subjects discussed was this memorandum. He was not ready to accept it as a whole or at once.[1]

'*January* 30, 1919: Lord Robert Cecil was my most important visitor. We went over the Covenant for the League of Nations and there was but little disagreement between us. He agrees with our views more than he dares admit, because

articles continued to appear, he would find himself compelled to publish his own views. So far he had only spoken to people in that room and to the members of the American delegation, so that nothing had been communicated to the Press regarding President Wilson's views, either by himself or by his associates. . . . Nevertheless the time might come when he would be compelled against his own wishes to make a full public *exposé* of his views.'

[1] Ultimately this memorandum was accepted by the President and became Article XXII in the final draft. Colonel House's endorsement for Wilson's benefit was as follows: 'L. G. and the Colonials are meeting at 11.30 and this is a draft of a resolution that Smuts hopes to get passed. He wants to know whether it is satisfactory to you. It seems to me a fair compromise. E. M. H.'

For the text of the resolution, see appendix to this chapter.

he sees that his people will not follow him. I am to get Orlando in line and he is to get the French, and when this is done we will have a general meeting [of the Committee].

'We discussed the colonial question and agreed absolutely. Strangely enough, at the same time that Cecil and I were discussing it here, the President was having "a first-class row" with Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Hughes and Massey. It looked as if the whole thing had "gone to pot." However, the row may do good. It will teach them all a lesson. The President was angry, Lloyd George was angry, and so was Clemenceau. It is the first time the President has shown any temper in his dealings with them.[1] . . . The British had come a long way, and if I had been in his place I should have congratulated them over their willingness to meet us more than halfway.

'The President, Orlando, and I met at the Hôtel Murat to-night in order to compare our Covenant for the League of Nations with that which the Italians have drawn. The meeting was very successful. We came to near agreement and without much difficulty. The exceptions that Orlando made to our draft were rather pertinent and some of them we agreed to accept. . . .

'I suggested to the President that we meet with the British to-morrow night in my rooms at the Crillon, and that the following night we bring the British and Italians together, leaving the French for another day. . . .

'*January* 31, 1919: We had a most successful meeting in my rooms, consisting of the President, General Smuts, Lord

[1] Sir William Wiseman wrote in a memorandum immediately after this incident: 'I walked down to the Quai d'Orsay with the Prime Minister, and pointed out the necessity of coming to an agreement on these questions with the President through House and not discussing them at the Conference. He was very anxious that House should attend Conferences.

'I went on to see House and explained the situation, and he, as usual, is intensely helpful.'

The result was that the Colonial Premiers finally accepted the principle of mandates as defined by Smuts.

Robert Cecil, and myself. David Miller was the only other person present. We discussed our difficulties regarding the League and brought them nearly to a vanishing point. We decided that Miller, representing us, and Hurst, representing the British, should draft a new form of Covenant based upon the one which the President and I jointly prepared.... The President remained behind for a quarter of an hour in order to talk and felicitate with me over the successful outcome of the evening's conference.

'I took occasion to tell him that he should devote just as much time to the League of Nations before he left for home as was necessary; that the relative importance of the League and the other things that were being done at the Quai d'Orsay were not to be compared. In the one instance, the world was being turned upside down and a new order was being inaugurated. In the other instance, it was simply a question of boundaries and what not, which had been the subject matter of peace conferences since time immemorial. I urged him, therefore, to put his back under the League and make it his main effort during the Conference. I thought he had a great opportunity to make himself the champion of peace and to change the order of things throughout the world.

'The President asked what I thought he should talk about at the reception which the Chamber of Deputies is to give him on Monday afternoon at five o'clock. I thought if he would speak on the League of Nations and say that France had really made its birth possible because of the position she had been forced into by Germany, and the obvious necessity of such a war never again being possible. He seemed pleased with the suggestion.

'*February* 2, 1919: David Miller brought me the revised Covenant for the League of Nations.[1] He was up until four o'clock this morning and was at it by 8.30 again in order to

[1] Generally known as the 'Hurst-Miller Draft.'

get it finished and printed to present to the President and me this afternoon, so we might look it over before tomorrow's meeting. I have sent Miller to the Hôtel Murat to go over it with the President as he has with me, explaining what changes have been made in our draft and the reasons for making them.'

The first meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations was called for the evening of February 3. On the evening before, President Wilson came to the Crillon to go over the Hurst-Miller draft with Colonel House.[1] He expressed some dissatisfaction with it and asked House and Miller to rewrite his own second Paris draft, taking over from the Hurst-Miller draft clauses upon religious equality, the publication of future treaties, and the prevention of commercial discrimination among members of the League. Miller took this new document and by superhuman efforts succeeded in having it printed by the early morning of February 3.[2] It was this and not the Hurst-Miller draft which the President wished to place before the Conference Committee in the evening as the basic document for discussion.

But the British not unnaturally objected to this change of programme, which would make the initial plan before the Committee a purely American rather than an Anglo-American proposition. Largely at the insistence of Colonel House,

[1] The Hurst-Miller draft, although it included material not in Wilson's plan, was expressed more succinctly, perhaps with greater clarity. It covers only seven and a half printed pages, to Wilson's ten and three quarters.

[2] Mr. R. S. Baker is apparently unaware of the existence of this draft. In his *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* he mentions the first and second Paris drafts only. The President altogether made four drafts, one in Washington, and three in Paris. A letter sent by Wilson to D. H. Miller indicates that it was the third Paris draft which he hoped would serve as the basis of the Commission's work; this is in accord with the impressions of House and Wiseman. See Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 75.

Wilson finally agreed that the Hurst-Miller draft and not his own third Paris draft should be presented to the Committee.

'*February* 3, 1919: I had my usual call from Wiseman,' wrote House. 'He said Lord Robert was greatly perturbed when he heard that the President, Miller, and I had gotten together last night and revamped our own Covenant of the League of Nations.

'Miller, the President, and I worked [last night] from a little after eight until after ten o'clock. I tried to get the President to accept the [Hurst-Miller] draft which had been agreed upon Friday night which Cecil, Smuts, he, and I had approved. He said the document had 'no warmth or color in it' and he very much preferred the one which we already had. I agreed with him, and yet I knew the wisest thing to do was to accept the other as a basis for our discussions today. After we revamped our own, Miller remained up the entire night supervising the printing of it and had it ready for us by breakfast this morning. Sir William thought it would be exceedingly unwise to let Lord Robert come into the general meeting of the Committee this afternoon feeling as he did, and asked what suggestions I had to make. I told him to have Cecil come a quarter of an hour before the meeting and I would undertake to have the President here and we would see what could be done.

'I telephoned the President and told him we were making a mistake in not keeping Lord Robert Cecil in harmony with us; he was the one man connected with the British Government who really had the League of Nations most at heart. . . .

'The three of us met promptly at 2.15 in my study. The meeting bade fair to be stormy for the first seven or eight minutes. After that, things went better and the President finally decided . . . to take the joint draft of Miller and Hurst

and use it as a basis for discussion. After that, everything went smoothly.[1]

'The full committee of fifteen met in one of my salons and all during the discussion Lord Robert was on our side. I think the President was quite content that he had yielded the point. . . .

'I could not help thinking that perhaps this room would be the scene of the making of the most important human document that has ever been written.'

IV

The Committee, or Commission as it came to be called, appointed by the Conference to present a plan for a League of Nations was the most distinguished of the Peace Conference. President Wilson had chosen himself with Colonel House to represent the United States, and was in the chair for all the February meetings of the Commission except the last. The two ablest of the British advocates of the League, Cecil and Smuts, were selected by Lloyd George. The importance of the Commission was further enhanced by the presence of the Italian Prime Minister, whom House had discovered to be an ardent and open-minded supporter of the League idea and more than any one else ready to sink personal opinions in his desire for speed and unanimity.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January* 24, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It occurred to me after you left this afternoon that it would be a good move to get Orlando to appoint himself

[1] Sir William Wiseman, who was in close touch with both Cecil and House, describes the incident as follows: 'House persuaded the President to revert to the Hurst-Miller draft, and when Cecil got down at 2.15 the President was ready to agree. The President had then to keep the meeting going with a speech while Miller went around to his office and got enough copies of the old draft to be handed around.'

one of the two to represent Italy on the Committee for the League of Nations. He has agreed to do this and with much enthusiasm.

Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts will undertake to do some missionary work not only with the Italians but with the Japs. In a few days I think we will have the situation sufficiently well in hand to call a meeting of the Committee as a whole.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

The Commission included two delegates for each of the Principal Powers, and one each for Serbia, China, Brazil, Portugal, and Belgium. Later at the demand of the smaller Powers, delegates were added for Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Greece, and Rumania. In general the smaller Powers chose their ablest delegates, and the Commission included such distinguished names as Venizelos, Hymans, Koo, and Vesnitch.

'It was in Colonel House's office at the Crillon — on the third floor —' writes Mr. Baker, 'that this meeting of the nations to make a new world constitution was held. . . . It was Colonel House who cunningly staged the meetings. The President sat at the head of the table. On his right was Orlando, the Italian Premier, the only other chief of a Great Power. On his left sat Colonel House himself, active, bright-eyed, watchful, silent. In a chair just behind and between them, leaning forward to whisper, was the American legal adviser of the Commission, David Hunter Miller. On Colonel House's left were the British members, Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts. This was what may be called the pro-League bloc. Farther away sat the French delegates, M. Bourgeois and M. Larnaude. . . .

'Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda were there for Japan: silent, unemotional, but watchful; rising with power

N. MAKINO

S. CHINDA

only when their own interests were affected. Koo, for China, spoke much more than the Japanese put together and was nearer the American position than any other delegate.' [1]

'Of all the nineteen members of the Commission,' writes Mr. Miller, 'the one heard least of all was an American. Colonel House spoke only at one meeting, and that was an occasion when the President was away and a few words from a representative of the United States were necessary. But a pilot does not have to talk, if he steers well. And the final agreement of the Commission, its rejection of the proposals which would have sunk the ship and its acceptance of those changes which were necessary to obtain unanimity, were due to the confidence which the representatives of Great Britain, of France, of Japan, and of other less important Powers had in Colonel House, and to the extraordinary influence which he exerted, supported as he was by the authority of the President.' [2]

The League of Nations Commission held ten meetings, and on February 13 was ready to lay the draft of the Covenant before the Plenary Conference. Historians have commented with irony or admiration upon this reconstruction of the international system in ten days. As a matter of fact the Commission did not make the Covenant in this period. It was made before they met. The functions of the Commission were almost entirely critical, a reworking of the Hurst-Miller draft, which was itself the result of long consideration and numerous preceding drafts.

At the first meeting on February 3, Wilson made the suggestion that the Anglo-American draft be accepted as a basis for discussion; he was supported by Orlando and without debate it was so agreed. This decision not merely made for speed but left the advantage with the British and the

[1] *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 278–79.

[2] D. H. Miller, in *What Really Happened at Paris*, 408.

Americans, who were the most enthusiastic supporters of the League. Both Cecil and Wilson urged the elimination of anything that would hamper speed, and objected to a general discussion of principles. The President was all for informality and did not even wish notes made of the discussions, lest he should be hampered in changing his mind.[1] He was finally persuaded to accept a secretariat, and *procès-verbaux* were made of the conversations; but when Koo suggested that it would be well to furnish the nations not represented with copies of these *procès-verbaux* the President 'objected to this on the ground that it would lead to publicity.'

Thus the Committee worked rapidly, striving always to accept without talk the points on which they were agreed and to isolate for discussion those that raised differences of opinion. Of the latter the most important were the question of the representation of the smaller States upon the Council; the problem of disarmament and the disposal of an armed force by the League; the question of religious and racial equality; the wording of the section on mandates. It was finally settled that the smaller Powers should be granted a representation of four upon the Council and that the Dominions and India, which enjoyed separate representation at the Peace Conference, should be granted the same in the Assembly of the League. General Smuts' statement on mandates, distinguishing between different types, was accepted and remained unchanged throughout later drafts. The religious clause advocated by President Wilson was finally dropped, and the effort of the Japanese to introduce an article concerning the principle of racial equality proved unsuccessful. The French endeavored persistently and likewise without success to provide for an international army, or at least an international staff; coupled with their opposition to Germany's entrance into the League, this would have made of the League a continuance of the anti-German alliance. The

[1] Miller, *op, cit.*, 409.

proposition was consistently opposed by Wilson and Cecil, and it received no effective support from the smaller Powers.

'The most serious hitch,' wrote Steed, 'came on February 11th when Wilson absolutely declined to accept the French demand for the creation of an international force that should operate under the executive control of the League of Nations. M. Bourgeois urged the French view with much eloquence and pertinacity. Wilson claimed that the Constitution of the United States did not permit of any such limitation upon its sovereignty; and Lord Robert Cecil took a similar view in regard to the British Empire. The French stood their ground and declined to surrender the claim which, in their view, could alone prevent the League of Nations Covenant from being a philosophical treatise, devoid of practical authority. Thus the sitting broke up towards midnight on February 11th, leaving the position very strained.' [1]

The French finally agreed to pass the draft tentatively, and by the morning of February 13 the Commission was ready for the second reading. An article by Steed in the *Daily Mail* of that date urged compromise and the necessity of completing the Covenant in some form, even if imperfect; for if the Commission failed there would never be another chance.

'The difficulty consists in the fact that the Peace Conference is engaged upon a double task. It has to frame a peace with Germany and to secure from her adequate reparation for her misdeeds. It has also to frame a peace for the world at large that shall form a valid protection against future wars when the immediate lessons of this war have been forgotten or have become merely historical memories.

'Some Allied countries concentrate their minds almost

[1] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 282.

exclusively upon the first aspect of this double task. Others think chiefly of the second aspect. The real difficulty is to find a common denominator between the two.

'This common denominator can be found only in a wisely constructed plan for the League of Nations. If the plan be made with exclusive reference to the conditions of the Great War and the problems to be solved in the immediate future, it may prove unacceptable to some important nations and unworkable in practice. It must not be made, so to speak, solely under the influence of shell-shock.

'On the other hand, it must not be too far removed from the practical lessons of the war. It must not be too other-worldly.

'The way out is to create a healthy embryo and to let it grow. No man can tell exactly how it will grow. But it is certain that it will grow into a great and powerful organism exactly in proportion as the spirit in which it is created is honest and unselfish.

'If it be not made now, it may never be made and, for lack of it, the nations may revert to the bad old system of alliances and armaments, the parent of future wars and stepmother of civilization.' [1]

The spirit of this article, which was directed at the French plan of creating an anti-German alliance as well as at Wilson's unwillingness to compromise, was not reflected in the Commission's discussion of February 13, when the second reading of the Covenant was taken up. The French demanded that the preamble contain a reference to German responsibility for the war, and Bourgeois again raised the question of an international staff. But the lack of support for their demands, coupled with the skill of Lord Robert Cecil who presided in Wilson's absence, enabled the Commission to accept the draft Covenant unanimously.

[1] Paris *Daily Mail*, February 13, 1919.

It was extraordinary that the delegates of fourteen nations should have been able to agree upon the Covenant. It was only possible because of the amount of work carried on between the meetings by the drafting committees and in informal conversations. Of this essential fact, as well as of the atmosphere of the Commission, excerpts from the papers of Colonel House give us a glimpse.

V

'We made considerable progress,' wrote House, on February 4, 'in the meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations. . . . Hymans, Cecil, the President, and Bourgeois did most of the talking. The Japs never speak. General Smuts speaks so seldom that it is practically not at all. My province is to keep things running smoothly, . . . to find in advance where trouble lies and to smooth it out before it goes too far.

'Cecil and I do nearly all the difficult work between the meetings of the Committee and try to have as little friction at the meetings as possible. The President often tells me that under no circumstances will he do a certain thing and, a few hours later, consents. . . .

'Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda came for advice concerning what Japan had best do regarding the race question. There is a demand in Japan that the Peace Conference through the League of Nations should express some broad principle of racial equality. Chinda and Makino do not desire to bring it up themselves if they can avoid doing so. I advised them to prepare two resolutions, one which they desired, and another which they would be willing to accept in lieu of the one they prefer.

'Chinda and Makino said: "On July 8th at Magnolia you expressed to Viscount Ishii sentiments which pleased the Japanese Government, therefore we look upon you as a friend and we have come for your advice."

'I took occasion to tell them how much I deprecated race, religious, or other kinds of prejudices. It was not confined, however, to any one country or against any particular class of people; prejudice exists among the Western peoples against one another as well as against Eastern peoples. One can cite the contempt which so many Anglo-Saxons have for the Latins, and *vice versa*. This is one of the serious causes of international trouble, and should in some way be met.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *February* 5, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose two papers which I think you should have before the meeting to-night.

The first is a draft of the preamble and articles one and two as provisionally adopted last night.

The second is article three as drafted at a meeting at which Lord Robert Cecil, General Smuts, Orlando, and Mr. Koo were present. I tried to get Bourgeois, but he could not be reached.

To-night Orlando will propose the adoption of article three as drafted.

You will note that the next to the last paragraph of article three is the same as the last paragraph of article two in Provisional Draft. If article three is adopted as drafted the last paragraph of article two will be left out.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*February* 5, 1919: I showed the President the draft that Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda had brought this afternoon. The resolution they wanted we discarded at once, but the resolution which they had prepared as a compromise the President thought might do by making a slight change, which he did in his own handwriting. Later in the evening

I showed Chinda what we had prepared, and he seemed to think it would be satisfactory. He wished to first discuss it with his colleagues.

'*February* 6, 1919: The meeting of the League of Nations Committee last night broke up earlier than usual. We did not sit later than eleven. This was by request of one of the French members who lives out of town and has difficulty in catching trains.

'The main controversy was over the number of members which the smaller Powers should have in the Executive Council. The smaller Powers wished four and were not prepared to accept my suggestion of two. They would have been entirely content with two if the Smuts-Wilson plan which we put in our first proposal had not suggested giving them four. The debate grew so warm that after an hour Lord Robert Cecil moved that we pass it up for the moment and go on with the balance of article three and others.

'We then moved quickly, and adopted down to and including article six. Our worst difficulty was about India. The President had declared to me that under no circumstances would he consent to the admission of a delegate from India, because it was not self-governing. General Smuts very cleverly offered the suggestion that India being one of the signatory Powers, would have automatically a right to a delegate, therefore the article would not apply to her, but to subject states or colonies that might desire admittance to the League. The President accepted this and, I think, rather gladly.

'No one seems to have thought that the British in a general conference of the League of Nations will have six votes to the other Great Powers' one; that is, the British Isles will have one, and there will be one each for Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India. When this dawns on the Conference I am wondering what they will do. As far as I am concerned, I shall not bring it up and for rea-

sons which seem to me sufficient. If Great Britian can stand giving her Dominions [separate] representation in the League, no one should object.

'Viscount Chinda brought another draft covering the race question. He found, after consultation with his legal adviser, that the one we agreed upon was practically meaningless. The one he brought to-day will not be accepted either by our people or the British Colonies. The Japs are making the adoption of a clause regarding immigration a *sine quo non* of their adhesion to the League of Nations. I have a feeling that it can be worked out by a satisfactory compromise which will in no way weaken the American or British Dominions' position and yet will satisfy the *amour-propre* of the Japanese.

'*February* 7, 1919: We had the usual meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations last night. We did not adjourn until eleven. Many important articles were adopted. Practically everything originates from our end of the table; that is, with Lord Robert Cecil and the President. . . . The President excels in such work. He seems to like it and his short talks in explanation of his views are admirable. I have never known any one to do such work as well. The President, perhaps, lays too much stress on details. It is not a hard-and-fast trade we are making with one another, and a more flexible instrument would be better than a rigid one. It is the spirit back of the Covenant that counts more than the text.

'*February* 8, 1919: We held a meeting of the Committee for the League of Nations this morning at 10.30 and continuously until after one. We will not meet again until Monday morning. We did not make as good progress as we should. Last night we agreed to form a committee to smooth out some of the phrasing of two or three of the articles about which we agree in principle, but cannot quite phrase to our liking.

'*February* 9, 1919: I had a good many callers to-day, including Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino, who came again upon the inevitable race question. I have placed them "on the backs" of the British, for every solution which the Japanese and I have proposed, Hughes of the British Delegation objects to.

'*February* 11, 1919: We had a meeting in my rooms of the Committee for the League of Nations. It lasted from 10.30 A.M. until 1.30 P.M. Bourgeois took up a large part of the time insisting that we have an international army, and he could not be silenced even though the President repeatedly told him that the United States could not possibly join such a league.

'*February* 12, 1919: A great many callers to-day. Massingham of *The Nation* is disturbed over the way the League is arranging for representation. He believes there should be a representation of the minority. As a matter of fact, all labor and socialist organizations want just this and the President has done his best to meet it, but has been able to draw up nothing which seems to us practical. I asked Massingham to submit something if possible before 10.30 to-morrow, when the Committee meets again. He said General Smuts was in full sympathy with this purpose, and I therefore advised that he see Smuts and agree upon the formula and have Smuts present it to-morrow morning.

'Viscount Chinda called again to say he could get nothing definite from the British and that he intended to present a resolution himself which would be more drastic than the one the President agreed to accept. His idea is that while it will not be adopted, it will be an explanation to his people in Japan.[1] He thanked me warmly for the interest I had taken

[1] The text of this clause was as follows:

'The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or fact, on account of their race or nationality.'

and said his Government and people would always remember my "considerate sympathy."

'*February* 13, 1919: This has been a memorable day. We finished the Covenant for the League of Nations. The President sat with us in the morning from ten-thirty until shortly after one in order to have a second reading of the draft. We got through with about a quarter of the Covenant or, to be precise, with six of the articles. The President could not come in the afternoon, and I asked Lord Robert Cecil to take the chair. We agreed to try and make a record and, much to our gratification, we finished the other twenty-one articles by half-past six o'clock. . . .

'Lord Robert took several votes this afternoon and in this way stopped discussion.

'We had arranged to have another meeting to-night at 8.30. When I telephoned the President at seven o'clock that we had finished, he was astounded and delighted.

'We passed [by] Article 21 of the old draft because Baron Makino was insistent upon the race clause going in if the religious clause was retained. I would not agree to eliminate the religious clause without first giving the President a chance to express himself, but tentatively promised that it should be withdrawn, in which event Baron Makino promised to withdraw, for the moment, the race amendment which neither the British nor we could take in the form in which he finally presented it.

'Makino agreed upon a form the other day which the President accepted and which was as mild and inoffensive as possible, but even that the British refused. . . . I understand that all the British Delegation were willing to accept the form the President, Makino, and Chinda agreed on, excepting Hughes of Australia. He has been the stumbling-block.

'Bourgeois tried in every way possible to get in some clause by which we should have an international army under the

direction of the League. Failing that, he tried for an international staff. Lord Robert was willing to accept the insidious staff proposal made by Bourgeois and Larnaude. I objected to it, and Lord Robert sustained me by making a talk against it. Then Bourgeois and his confrère insisted upon putting in something about the Hague Tribunal. They have the greatest reverence for that institution. . . .

'In talking to the President afterward, he agreed to the proposal to eliminate Clause 21 [religious clause] after I had explained the trouble and told him that an informal vote was taken which resulted in practical unanimity against it.

'Perhaps for the President's *penchant* for the number 13, his attention was called to the fact that the Covenant was finished on the 13th of the month and that the number of articles was double that number.[1]

'It would be interesting to observe how much of the original draft of the Covenant made at Magnolia remains in this document. Of course we have added a great many clauses since its revision was undertaken, but we have added them from the Wilson-Cecil, Miller documents. In speaking to the President about the matter, he said that as far as he was concerned he preferred the original draft as agreed upon at Magnolia last summer. Certainly that document was more human and a little less legalistic.

'*February* 14, 1919: Gordon wrote a cable to Tumulty for the President's approval, inviting the Foreign Relations Committee of both the Senate and the House to dine with him as soon as practicable after his arrival, and requesting them to refrain from comment in Congress upon the League of Nations until he had an opportunity to discuss it with them. When I first proposed this several days ago, he declared he would not do it and that the most he would do would be to make an address to Congress. This seemed

[1] If the religious clause which the President desired had been retained, there would have been twenty-seven articles.

wholly inadequate because it would not please Congress, since they would take it that he had called them together as a schoolmaster, as they claim he usually does. There would be no chance for discussion, consultation, or explanation, and they would not regard it as a compliment but rather the contrary.

'He read the cable that had been prepared and changed only one word. It was sent immediately.'

The President to Mr. Tumulty

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 14, 1919

Please deliver to each Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate and the House the following message from me.

'Last night the Committee of the Conference charged with the duty of drafting a constitution for a League of Nations concluded its work and this afternoon before leaving for the United States it is to be my privilege and duty to read to a Plenary Session of the Conference the text of the twenty-six articles agreed upon by this Committee.

'The Committee which drafted these articles was fairly representative of the world. Besides the representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, representatives of Belgium, Serbia, China, Greece, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Brazil, and Portugal actively participated in the debates and assisted materially in the drafting of this Constitution. Each article was passed only after the most careful examination by each member of the Committee. There is a good and sufficient reason for the phraseology and substance of each article. I request that I be permitted to go over with you article by article the Constitution reported before this part of the work of the Conference is made the subject of debate in Congress. With this in view I request that you dine with me at the White House as

soon after I arrive in the United States as my engagements will permit. I have asked Mr. Tumulty to fix the date of this dinner.'

Please arrange this dinner for a date as soon as practicable after my arrival.

WILSON

'*February* 14, 1919: The newspaper men sent in a request for a five-minute interview with the President. . . . He consented reluctantly and then, to my astonishment, went into the other room and talked to fifteen or twenty American correspondents for nearly an hour, all of them standing. He spoke in the pleasantest and frankest way to them. When he got to talking he was so enthused with what he had to say that . . . it was one o'clock when he left for his luncheon.

'At 3.30 there was a plenary meeting of the Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay. . . . After some discussion with the President and Lord Robert Cecil, word was sent to Clemenceau through Frazier that the order of the afternoon would be that the President, acting as Chairman for the Committee to prepare a Covenant for the League of Nations, would make a report and read the Covenant which had been constructed, and that he would make a speech upon the subject. That Lord Robert Cecil would follow with a speech; then Orlando and perhaps Venizelos. This programme was literally carried out with the exception that Bourgeois also spoke for France.

'We tried to get Bourgeois not to mention any of the reservations he had made concerning the Covenant, but our efforts were futile. . . .

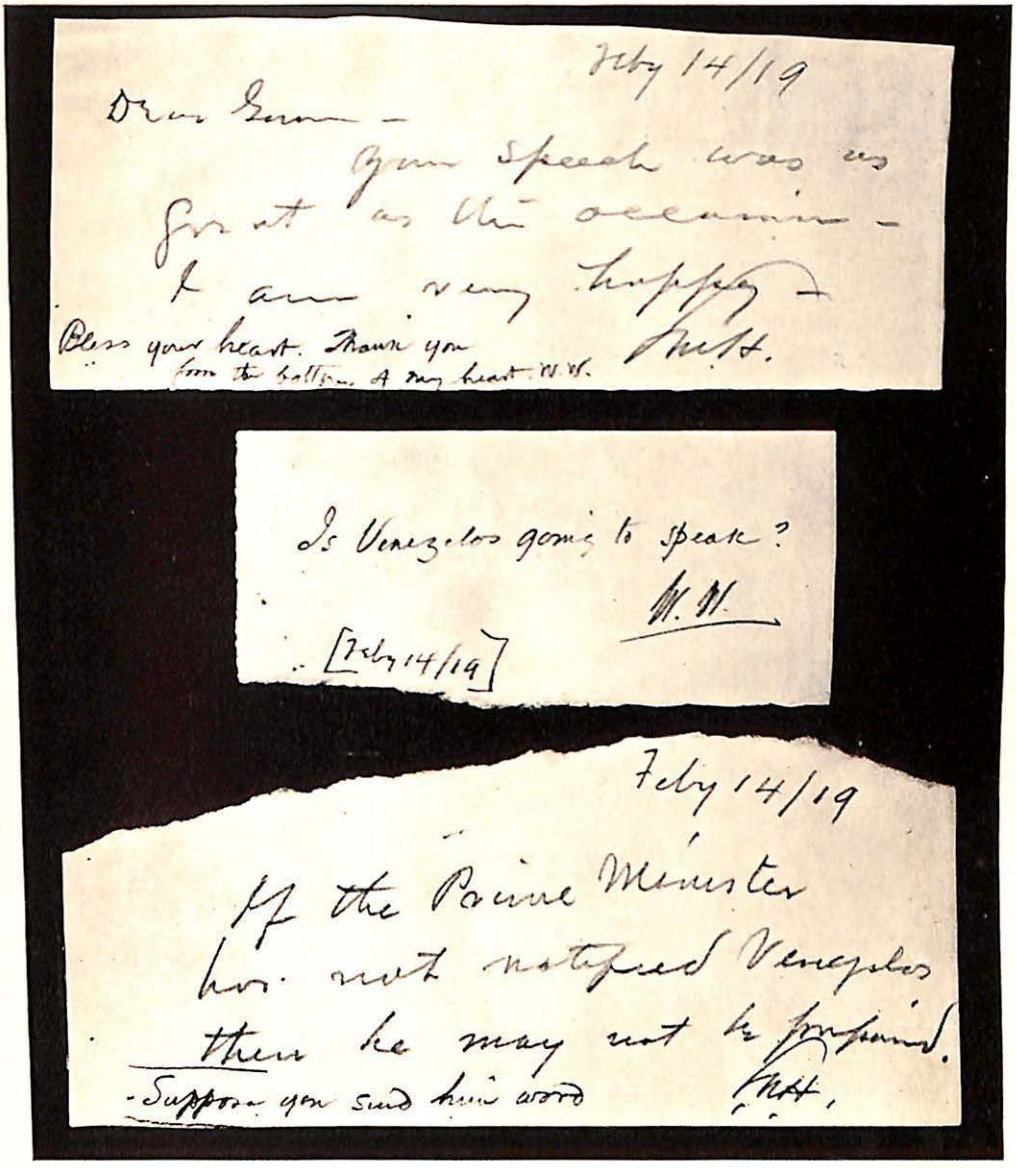
'Returning to the Crillon, I saw the newspaper correspondents as usual and after dinner went to the Hôtel Murat to bid the President and Mrs. Wilson good-bye and go with them to the station. Practically all official France was at the station. From the curb to the train itself, a distance of

many hundred feet, a beautiful red carpet was spread with palms and other evergreens on each side, making a corridor of some fifteen or twenty feet wide and extending several hundred feet. The President and Madame Poincaré, M. Clemenceau, and his entire Cabinet, the British Ambassador, and everybody else of prominence was there. The President bade me a fervent good-bye, clasping my hand and placing his arm around me. The entire occasion was a fitting tribute to him and was an appropriate ending to a very memorable visit. He looked happy, as well indeed he should.'

VI

Thus at the Plenary Session of February 14, the League of Nations was born. Wilson had achieved a notable, almost an astounding, triumph. In the face of apathy and increasing opposition, he had translated his ideal of a new international order into concrete terms. At the moment when the materialistic reaction, inevitable after four years of war, threatened to capture the Conference, he had successfully emphasized the higher purposes of mankind and pointed the way to a safer and better future. Concerning his presentation of the Covenant to the Conference on February 14, Steed wrote in the Paris *Daily Mail* the next day:

'It was impossible to listen to the document which President Wilson read, to his comments upon it and to the declarations of the Allied representatives, without feeling that the affairs of the world were being lifted into new dimensions. The old dimensions of national individualism, secrecy of policies, competitive armaments, forcible annexations for selfish purposes and unqualified State sovereignty, were raised, if only for an instant, to a higher plane on which the organized moral consciousness of peoples, the publicity of international engagements and of government by the consent of and for the good of the governed, became prospective realities.



Feby 14/19

Dear Gene —

Your speech was as great as the occasion — I am very happy —

Bless your heart. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. W.W.

M.H.

Is Venezelos going to speak?

W.W.

[Feby 14/19]

Feby 14/19

If the Prime Minister has not notified Venezelos then he may not be forgiving.

Suppose you send him word

M.H.

NOTES EXCHANGED BY WILSON AND HOUSE AT PLENARY SESSION OF FEBRUARY 14, 1919, WHEN DRAFT OF COVENANT WAS READ AND EXPLAINED

'How long will the instant last? . . . No man can yet say. All that can be said is that yesterday a sense that something new, something irrevocable, had been done, pervaded the Conference Hall. All the speeches were made in the tone of men who were not, indeed, afraid of their own handiwork, but were obviously conscious of the boldness of attempting to frame a new charter for civilized and uncivilized humanity.'

On February 15, Wilson sailed, triumphant and confident, with the Covenant in his pocket, to confront his enemies in the Senate. But he left behind him unsettled issues at Paris, for the determination of which Europe clamored. If speed had been important in December, by February it was vital.

APPENDIX

General Smuts' Resolution on Mandates

January, 1919

1. Having regard to the record of the German administration in the colonies formerly part of the German Empire, and to the menace which the possession by Germany of submarine bases in many parts of the world would necessarily constitute to the freedom and security of all nations, the Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that in no circumstances should any of the German colonies be restored to Germany.

2. For similar reasons, and more particularly because of historic oppression by the Turks of all subject peoples and the terrible massacres of Armenians and others in recent years, the Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia must be completely severed from the Turkish Empire. This is without prejudice to the settlement of other parts of the Turkish Empire.

3. The Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that advantage should be taken of the opportunity afforded by the necessity of disposing of these colonies and territories formerly belonging to Germany and Turkey which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, to apply to these territories the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in the constitution of the League of Nations.

4. After careful study they are satisfied that the best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should

be entrusted to advanced nations who, by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as mandatories on behalf of the League of Nations.

5. The Allied and Associated Powers are of opinion that the character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

6. They consider that certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory power until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power.

7. They further consider that other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory subject to conditions which will guarantee the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the military training of the natives for other than police purposes, and the establishment of fortifications of military and naval bases, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League of Nations.

8. Finally they consider that there are territories such as South West Africa and the Pacific Islands which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the mandatory state, and other circumstances, can best be administered under the laws of the mandatory state as if they were integral portions thereof, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

In every case of mandate, the mandatory state shall render to the League of Nations an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

CHAPTER X

SPEEDING THE SETTLEMENT

Clemenceau . . . is anxious to speed up and make an early peace with Germany.

Colonel House to President Wilson, February 23, 1919

I

DURING the course of the Peace Conference, opponents of the League of Nations raised the criticism that the time and attention given to the framing of the Covenant prevented the Conference from concentrating upon the boundary and economic problems which must be solved before a treaty with Germany could be drafted, thus delaying the settlement at a moment of world crisis. The complaint formed one of the main lines of attack upon President Wilson, both at Paris and in the United States.

To a certain extent the complaint was justified. The President's preoccupation with the Covenant, although it took comparatively little time, monopolized his mental and nervous energy. His mind was so completely engaged with problems relative to the League that other issues became of secondary importance for him. It was thus that he did not proceed to meet the issue of the secret treaties at the very start of the Conference, by standing upon the validity of the pre-Armistice Agreement in which the Allies had endorsed the Fourteen Points. When he later met this issue he stood upon less secure ground, so that the contest he waged was complicated and long-drawn-out.

In another sense, however, the creation of the League, so far from postponing the settlement actually hastened and facilitated it. There were many problems which could not be solved at the moment, but must wait for a less hectic atmosphere, many arrangements which would for some time de-

mand international supervision. If it had not been for the existence of the League, to which control of these problems might be and was turned over, agreement upon the treaties would have been postponed indefinitely. Furthermore, the meetings of the Commission that framed the Covenant did not directly prevent the Council from attacking the economic and territorial questions. These meetings were held in the morning or evening, so that with one exception they did not conflict with the sessions of the Council.[1] The chiefs of state, including Mr. Wilson, were left with ample time to consider the specific issues relative to the German Treaty. It was not the drafting of the Covenant which prevented the Council from taking up the questions of the left bank of the Rhine, the Saar, the principle of reparations, the disarmament of Germany; it was rather that the Council had first to be educated by the reports of investigating committees, and next that they spent much of their time upon questions of executive policy: composing quarrels between Czechs and Poles; discussing the Russian *impasse;* planning new terms to be imposed upon Germany in the renewal of the Armistice; debating the raising of the blockade.

Europe was hungry and torn by the spirit of social unrest and nationalistic exuberance; it waited, feverish and excited, for the settlement. Whether or not the treaties proved satisfactory, it was vital that something should be decided and that the régime of uncertainty be ended. The demand was heard at Paris, but not until the beginning of February was its insistence recognized.

II

The first determined effort to reach a decision regarding the chief issues of the Treaty with Germany was begun just before President Wilson's departure for the United States.

[1] On that occasion, the afternoon session of February 13, Wilson attended the Council of Ten and not the Commission meeting.

It resulted directly from the difficulties connected with the renewal of the Armistice. The Germans had shown decided unwillingness to comply with the stipulations laid down in the Armistice; the Allies on their side displayed an equally strong tendency at each renewal, to insert new and more arduous conditions. While the political chiefs delayed the framing of treaty terms, the military leaders wished to put into the Armistice various conditions which, if they were accepted, would prejudice the final settlement in both its territorial and economic aspects; if they were refused by the Germans, a revival of actual warfare seemed imminent. The dangers of this situation were apparent, and a movement developed in which President Wilson soon took the lead, with the purpose of ending this policy of pin-pricks and drafting a preliminary treaty to include terms which, as regards military matters, would be final. General Bliss later described the circumstances: [1]

'When the time for the third renewal of the Armistice — February 11th — approached, the situation had grown more serious. The Allied armies were greatly reduced and the process of reduction was rapidly continuing. Notwithstanding the fact that the arms called for by the terms of the Armistice had been surrendered and that the Germans had abandoned on the field still more of many important articles of equipment than they had surrendered under the Armistice, there was a growing fear in certain quarters that there was still a great accumulation of arms in Germany and that their manufacturing plants were still producing them in quantities. When we consider the total demoralization of Germany at that time, it is difficult to believe that there was much ground for this apprehension. Nevertheless, the fear existed. It made itself evident in the still more drastic terms

[1] Tasker H. Bliss, 'The Armistices,' in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 16, p. 521.

that were proposed to be imposed in this renewal of the Armistice. . . .

'The American representative [General Bliss] expressed the following opinion: that the Allies had every reason for supporting the then existing Government in Germany; that this Government was as nearly a democratic one as could be expected at that time and under the circumstances; that the continual pin-thrusts being made by the Allies were playing into the hands of the opponents in Germany of this Government; that, if another revolution came, this Government would probably be succeeded either by an imperialistic military one, or by a bolshevist one; and that, finally, instead of these continual additions of new terms to the Armistice, there should be drawn up at once the final military peace terms which, being imposed upon Germany without further delay, would relieve the Allies of all further apprehension. . . .'

'*February* 5, 1919: General Bliss told me,' wrote House in his diary, 'of the meeting of the military part of the Supreme War Council at Versailles. President Wilson and I had this under discussion last night, and the President directed Bliss not to force the Germans to make radical changes in the Armistice to the advantage of the Allies. Bliss strongly recommended this position and the President accepted it. . . . [Drastic extension of Armistice conditions] is unfair and is not worthy of the Allied Governments.

'At the meeting the British, represented by General Wilson, and the Italians, represented by General Diaz, voted for further encroachment on German territory. Bliss was outvoted two to one. Foch said nothing and did not indicate his mind. However, he asked Bliss to remain behind and they discussed the question together for three quarters of an hour. Foch told Bliss that he was in thorough sympathy with the American position and that the position taken by

the British and Italians might bring a clash, and then everything would flame up again. The Armistice would be a thing of the past, and war of a certain sort would be on. Foch expressed the opinion that an immediate peace should be made with Germany so that the wheels of industry should be started in motion throughout the world. This has been my contention all the time. He thought the situation full of peril for us all. . . .

'I asked the President to come down in advance of the meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations, in order to tell him of the conversation between Bliss and myself. I suggested that before this matter was passed upon at the meeting of the Supreme War Council day after tomorrow, he either see Foch or get permission to use what he said to Bliss when he argued the matter with Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando.'

At Wilson's request, House undertook to discuss with the British and French the perils involved in progressive stiffening of the Armistice terms. The matter was introduced into the Council, where after long debate it was decided to refer the problem to a special commission under the presidency of Marshal Foch, which should be composed of military and economic experts. France was represented by M. Clementel and General Dégoutte; Great Britain by Lord Robert Cecil and General Thwaites; Italy by M. Crespi and General Cavallero; the United States by Mr. Norman Davis and General Bliss. It was a distinguished body and the report which it laid before the Council on February 12 proved convincing. The final paragraph of the report was as follows:

'The members of the Committee desire to express this, their opinion: to obtain as rapidly as possible a final result and to put a stop to the difficulties which are constantly renewed by the Germans, the members of the Committee

are of the opinion that Naval and Military terms of peace should be drawn up immediately by a Commission appointed for the purpose, and shall be imposed on the enemy.'

The suggestion was strongly supported by Mr. Balfour, who agreed with House as to the need of hastening every essential aspect of the German Treaty and who had already expressed his doubt of the policy of imposing fresh conditions on Germany through the Armistice. He proposed to the Council, accordingly:

'That only inevitably small changes, or no changes whatever, should be made in the Armistice until the Allies were prepared to say to Germany: "These are the final naval and military terms of peace, which you must accept in order to enable Europe to demobilize and so to resume its life on a peace footing and reëstablish its industries."'

President Wilson advocated an even more direct endorsement of the Commission proposal and an immediate drafting of the final military and naval terms, renewing the Armistice in the mean time without any change and making it terminable on a few days' notice. This would permit demobilization and finish off one important section of the peace.

Clemenceau protested. Like many of the French, he did not want demobilization before the complete Treaty terms were ready, since the Allies would thus deprive themselves of the force with which to compel Germany to accept the hard territorial and economic conditions which were to go in the Treaty:

'Once more, in his long career,' said Clemenceau, 'he felt compelled with great regret to state that his views differed very considerably from those he had just heard. What

would happen when the military terms were signed and the Allied armies demobilized? What force would be left to impose the economic and political terms on Germany? He did not think his hearers would allow themselves to be deceived. Let them read the German newspapers. It would be seen that they breathed nothing but threats. Ebert had said: "We will not accept terms that are too hard." The Allies, then, could take no step towards a military settlement or demobilization until all terms were decided upon.'

Mr. Balfour, however, pointed out that the purpose of drafting the military terms at once was to hasten the process of German disarmament:

'His plan might be good or it might be bad, but its object was to get over the danger which M. Clemenceau foresaw, so that Germany would not longer be able to resist, and the Allies would then be in a position to exact those reparations which might be thought to be just.'

He proposed, accordingly, resolutions designed to carry out the suggestion of the Commission, which Wilson had supported, for drafting an immediate military treaty. At the afternoon session Clemenceau gradually withdrew his opposition, influenced apparently by the promise of the military experts that they could draft the terms very rapidly. He pointed out, however, that the departure of Mr. Wilson would necessarily delay final decision:

'If the President had been staying,' Clemenceau stated, 'he would have raised no objection . . . but, as he was going, the difficulty arose, as he was quite unwilling to discuss the matter while President Wilson was away.'

But Wilson himself removed this objection by insisting

that as regards military questions there was no reason why the terms should not be settled in his absence:

'M. Clemenceau had paid him an undeserved compliment,' said the President. 'In technical matters most of the brains he used were borrowed: the possessors of these brains were in Paris. He would, therefore, go away with an easy mind if he thought that his plan had been adopted in principle. He had complete confidence in the views of his military advisers. . . . He did not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace.'

The proposal for an immediate treaty, finally approved by Clemenceau, was embodied in a resolution of which the following is the essential portion:

Resolution of the Supreme Council

PARIS, *February* 12, 1919

'Detailed and final naval, military, and air conditions of the preliminaries of peace shall be drawn up at once by a Committee to be presided over by Marshal Foch and submitted for the approval of the Supreme War Council; these, when approved, will be presented for signature to the Germans, and the Germans shall be at once informed that this is the policy of the Associated Governments.'

This resolution was not designed to interfere with hastening work on the territorial and economic aspects of the Treaty, upon which the various committees of the Peace Conference were engaged. President Wilson had discussed with Colonel House the desirability of pushing the work along every essential line during his absence in the United States. His opinion was that if questions other than the military could be prepared for final settlement, so much the

better; he authorized House to act for him during his absence and, in the session of February 12, informed the Council of the fact.

'President Wilson said that . . . he hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March,' the *procès-verbal* states, 'allowing himself only a week in America. But he did not wish that, during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up. He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away.' [1]

'*February* 14, 1919: The President came down this morning at ten,' House wrote in his diary, 'and did not leave until one. We sat in my private study for twenty minutes together, and during that time settled all the important questions that were on my mind to take up with him before he left for America. I outlined my plan of procedure during his absence: we could button up everything during the next four weeks. He seemed startled and even alarmed at this statement. I therefore explained that the plan was not to actually bring these matters to a final conclusion but to have them ready for him to do so when he returned. . . .

'One of the main things we should do was to fix a programme regarding what was necessary to make a preliminary peace with Germany, as follows:

'1. A reduction of their army and navy to a peace footing.

'2. A delineation of the boundaries of Germany. This to include the cession of the colonies.

[1] Mr. R. S. Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, chapter XVII) endeavors to prove that Wilson was taken by surprise and displeased by the Council's attempt to prepare a preliminary treaty covering territorial and economic questions during his absence. He quotes the first and the last sentence of the above passage, but omits entirely the key-sentence expressing Wilson's hope that these questions would be taken up. See appendix to this chapter, and *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 290

'3. The amount of money to be paid for reparation and the length of time in which to pay it.

'4. An agreement as to the economic treatment of Germany.

'I asked him if he had anything else to suggest in addition to these four articles. He thought they were sufficient.

'I asked him to bear in mind while he was gone that it was sometimes necessary to compromise in order to get things through; not a compromise of principle but a compromise of detail; he had made many since he had been here. I did not wish him to leave expecting the impossible in all things.'

III

On the same evening, February 14, President Wilson left Paris for his voyage to America. Colonel House, fully empowered to rush forward the studies necessary to the drafting of the Treaty with Germany, set to work with the British Foreign Secretary, who quite as much as House desired active progress.

'*February* 16, 1919: A long conference with Mr. Balfour this afternoon. . . . I outlined my views as to the best method of procedure in order to make a preliminary peace with Germany and to wind up quickly the business of the Conference regarding boundaries, etc., etc. He agreed to this, and is to see the Japanese delegates to-morrow. I promised to see the Italian delegates and obtain their consent. When this is done, he and I should see Clemenceau and try to get him in line with us.'

Lloyd George and Orlando had left the Conference to meet pressing political problems at home; they had given full powers to their Foreign Secretaries at Paris. Evidently all were agreed on the need of hastening the peace. But on

Wednesday, February 19, as Clemenceau in his automobile was driving from his apartment in the rue Franklin to meet Balfour and House, he was wounded by a Communist who fired seven shots point-blank at the Prime Minister. One of the bullets narrowly missed the spine and lodged behind the shoulder blade. 'Fortunately, the rascal was a bad shot,' remarked Clemenceau. Retaining consciousness and complete *sang-froid* he was able to walk to his bedroom. But despite the assurance that the wound was not fatal, the work of the Conference seemed threatened with long delay.

'Balfour and I,' wrote House, 'had an engagement with Clemenceau at ten o'clock. I received word at a little after nine that an attempt to assassinate him had been made and that he had been wounded. Balfour came shortly before ten to the Crillon and we had an hour and a quarter together. Baron Sonnino then came, and the three of us conferred for three quarters of an hour. We then went to the Ministry of War and left our cards and made inquiry regarding the President of the Council.

'Outside the personal side of it, it is a great misfortune that Clemenceau should have been shot at this time. He had come to our way of thinking that it was best to make a quick and early peace with Germany. He was brought to this, not only by a realization that Germany was as Foch said "flattened out," but because there are grave signs of unrest in the French army. I have been trying very hard to . . . make the Allies feel that if peace is not made soon, trouble may some day come overnight and make it imperative that a hasty and ill-considered peace be signed.

'*February* 20, 1919: Dutasta, Secretary General of the Peace Conference, called on Lansing and me to ask whether in the circumstances we were willing to defer meetings at the Quai d'Orsay until Monday. He said that by Sunday they would be able to determine whether Clemenceau would be

ready soon to take part or whether the Conference had better proceed without him. We agreed with reluctance, first stipulating it should be only for a day, but afterward agreeing if the British would consent that we would also. They went to Balfour and he refused any delay further than to-day's meeting. I think he acted wisely, for, heaven knows, the serious business we have in hand should not wait on any man's illness or misfortune.

'*February* 22, 1919: I received word that M. Clemenceau would like me to call for a conference. . . . I was with him for a little over twenty minutes. The poor fellow has not been able to leave his chair since he was shot. He speaks of it as "the accident." He should not be permitted to see visitors.'

The indomitable spirit of the Prime Minister prevailed over the advice of those who wished the Conference to await his complete recovery. He agreed with Balfour and House that work on the German Treaty should be pushed, an opinion in which Marshal Foch concurred.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 19, 1919

The following memorandum by the Chief of the British General Staff has just been sent me:

'I had an interesting interview with Marshal Foch this morning in which he expressed the following views: As the result of his recent discussions with the German representatives at Trèves, he is of opinion that under existing conditions we can dictate terms of peace to Germany. The German Government will agree to whatever terms we exact. But, he says, there is no time to lose. At present Germany has only one thought, and that is peace, the reasons being that her Government is insecure and wants peace in order to consolidate its position, and the people fear above all things

HOUSE, CLEMENCEAU, AND BONSAL

a renewal of hostilities. Further fighting would take place on German soil, and the Germans are afraid of the devastation of their territory. In the opinion of the Marshal, Germany has at present no military forces with which she could hope to dispute the advance of the Allied armies.

'For these reasons Germany will agree to our terms if we are prompt, but no one can say how long the existing conditions will last. Delay is dangerous. The Marshal, therefore, strongly advocates the settling at once of the three principal conditions of the peace that the Allies intend to impose upon Germany; namely: 1. The strength of her armed forces; 2. Her frontiers; 3. The indemnity she is to pay. He considers that if these matters could be settled by the Peace Conference during the next few days, and if he could be entrusted with the mission of proceeding again to Trèves with the Allied terms, say this day week, he would guarantee that the Germans would accept the terms on the following day. The world would then pass from a state of war to a state of peace for which it longs so ardently, and there would be universal rejoicing.

'As regards the three points mentioned above, Marshal Foch anticipates no difficulty in coming to an agreement during the next forty-eight hours as to the strength of Germany's peace army and navy. He is strongly in favour of saying to the Germans in this preliminary peace treaty that, whatever may be the fate of the Rhenish provinces and whatever form of government for these provinces the Allies may decide in favour of, under no circumstances will the German Empire extend beyond the Rhine. That in his opinion is essential for the security of France, and makes the settlement of the Western frontier a simple matter. He also considers that there should be no insuperable difficulties in settling a provisional frontier between Germany and Poland, which would be capable of modification in detail later. The Marshal would settle on a lump sum for Germany to pay, and

suggested 100 *milliards* of francs. It is, he says, not his business to consider the actual sum, but he pleads forcibly for the principle of including a lump sum by way of indemnity in the terms to be presented to Germany the next time he goes to Trèves. If the conditions of a preliminary peace treaty can thus be imposed on Germany, the Allies can then turn their attention to the Russian problem, which must take time to solve. The Marshal thinks the Allies may lose the war if they fail to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the Russian question, either by Germany settling it in her own interests, or by the spread of anarchy. He favours the solution of helping all the anti-Bolshevik elements in Russia, and all the neighbours of Russia who are resisting Bolshevik encroachment. He would go so far as to accept German coöperation after the signing of his preliminary treaty of peace, and thinks it might be very valuable.'

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 23, 1919

At his request I had a conference yesterday with Clemenceau.

1. He is anxious to speed up and make an early peace with Germany. He . . . realizes the danger of delay.

2. He is insistent upon the creation of a Rhenish Republic. There will be about four million of Germans aggregated in this way. He desires that this Republic should be exempt from the payment of any indemnity; that they should have no armed force; that everything should be done to make them prosperous and contented so that they will not want to join the German Federation and if they have such a desire they will not be permitted to do so.

3. On the east, Clemenceau thinks that Dantzig should go to Poland. Our experts also believe this to be the best solution and they are joined, I understand, in this belief by the

British experts, but the British Government disagree on this point.

4. Clemenceau says that German Austria will not join the German Federation if they received an intimation from the Allies that they do not wish them to do so. He is insistent that this intimation be given them.

5. He thinks the entire terms should be given at once and that the military terms should not be made now [separately] as at first planned.[1] There was afterwards common agreement on this point at our meeting at the Quai d'Orsay.

6. He thought he would be able to attend meetings in a few days. I doubt it. I feel he is by no means out of danger.

7. I assume that you are getting full reports of the meetings at the Quai d'Orsay.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House was far from approving the French in their proposal to separate permanently the Rhinelands from Germany, and he shortly received from President Wilson a very definite warning against even a temporary separation. The President also urged him to beware of being hurried into final decision on German boundaries, which demanded long and careful consideration. On February 20, he sent House a cable regarding the views of Marshal Foch, of which the following is a paraphrase of the more important sentences:

. . . I have just read the memorandum given you by the Chief of the British General Staff of an interview with Marshal Foch. It seems to me like an attempt to use the good offices of the French to hurry us into an acquiescence in their plans with regard to western bank of Rhine. . . . I know I can trust you and our colleagues to withstand such a pro-

[1] This Mr. Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, chapter XVII) regards as a betrayal of Mr. Wilson. At least the President was informed of it and in his reply to House raised no objection.

gramme immovably, except of course I am willing to have the strictly military and naval terms promptly decided and presented to the Germans. I am not willing to have anything beyond the military and naval terms [settled] and believe that the Conference of Ten would be going very much beyond its powers to attempt anything of this sort. The determination of the geographic boundaries of Germany involves the fortunes and interests of the other peoples, and we should not risk being hurried into a solution arrived at solely from the French official viewpoint. . . . Warm thanks for full information you are sending.[1]

It was by no means part of House's plan to push the territorial and economic questions to the point of decision before the President's return. He was anxious, however, to clear the ground during the President's absence by hastening the work of the expert committees; the President himself had told the Council that he did not wish those matters to be held up while he was away. He therefore cabled back to Wilson the details of the plan which he had evolved with Mr. Balfour for hastening work on the treaties. The President evidently accepted this plan as desirable, for he sent no further comment.

It was agreed that at the Council meeting of February 22, Mr. Balfour should present resolutions designed to push forward the work on the territorial and economic clauses.[2] Mr.

[1] Wilson to House, February 20, 1919.

[2] As presented to the Council, they read as follows:

'(1) Without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace, to Germany at an early date, the Conference agrees that it is desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of other preliminary Peace Terms with Germany and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed.

'(2) The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the Naval, Military and Air Conditions, shall cover the following points:

(a) The approximate future frontiers of Germany:

(b) The financial arrangements to be imposed on Germany:

Balfour, by the initial phrase of his resolutions, 'without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military, and Air Conditions of Peace, to Germany at an early date,' was careful to leave untouched the question of a speedy military treaty with Germany. He was not anxious to upset the decision of February 12, in which Mr. Wilson had concurred so heartily. He regarded the military terms as the most important of all, he wished to do nothing that would delay them, and he believed that by hastening them the final settlement would be advanced. 'If the final Military Proposals,' he said, 'were shortly to be ready for consideration by the Conference, should not advantage be taken of that fact to obtain an important instalment of the Preliminary Peace?'

But, unfortunately, the report of the military experts was not ready, and it seemed a pity to lose time which might be utilized to prepare the political and economic terms. 'A general feeling of impatience,' said Mr. Balfour, 'was now becoming manifest in all countries on account of the apparent slow progress the Conference was making in the direction of Final Peace. It would be folly to ignore altogether the danger that feeling might produce.'

The French were naturally in sympathy with the proposal, since Clemenceau from the beginning had seen danger in proceeding to demobilization before the complete terms were presented to Germany. Clemenceau had yielded when it was assumed that the military terms could be drafted in a

(c) Our economic relations with Germany after the war:
(d) Responsibility for breaches of the Laws of War.

'(3) In order that the Conference may have at its disposal with the least possible delay the results of the labours of the various Commissions which have been investigating these subjects it is requested that the various Commissions will send in their reports to the Secretary-General not later than Saturday, March 8th. This will not apply to Commissions set up after February 15th which may be unable to render their final reports at so early a date, but it is requested that in these cases interim reports may be presented dealing with all matters affecting the preliminaries of Peace with Germany.'

few days. Now that it was clear that there would be delay, he urged strongly the attempt to prepare the political and economic terms and, if possible, insert them also in a preliminary treaty.

'He had that morning,' said Mr. Balfour, 'in company with M. Pichon, discussed the question with M. Clemenceau, who inclined to the view that the Naval and Military Terms of Peace should not be separated from the other aspects of the case. M. Clemenceau was extremely anxious to expedite matters but he thought that end would be best obtained by waiting until a conclusion had been reached on all subjects. M. Clemenceau held the view that if the stimulus towards a rapid decision were removed by the acceptance of the Naval and Military Terms by Germany, the other questions would be delayed for an infinity of time by small controversies.'

Colonel House supported Balfour strongly.

'Mr. House said he was very glad to see that the Conference intended to bring about as soon as possible a Preliminary Peace. In his opinion, the Peace Negotiations should have commenced on November 11th last, directly after the signing of the first Armistice. He had always felt that delay could only be favourable to Germany, and the longer the signing of Peace were postponed, the more chance would there be of circumstances becoming less favourable to the Allies. In regard to the two proposals now before the Conference, very severe military terms would have to be imposed on the Germans. And, he thought, the Germans would be more inclined to accept those conditions if, at the same time, the whole Peace Terms were made known to them. The Germans would then be made fully cognisant of their position.'

Mr. Lansing also agreed:

'It would be a mistake,' he said, 'to treat the military terms of peace as distinct from the other terms of peace. He would prefer to embody all the terms of a preliminary peace in one document: a separate treaty being made with each of the enemy countries on identic lines.'

Objection was raised by Sonnino alone, who pointed out that concentration upon the German Treaty would postpone the Austrian.

'He fully agreed that everything should be done to speed up the settlement of all questions. He would prefer first to get the military conditions out of the way, after which all the rest could be examined together. But, if the Conference decided to make a distinction and to separate the German question from the Austro-Hungarian question, and let everything else slide, the situation so created would spell revolution in Italy. Such a procedure would mean an indefinite prolongation of the Peace Negotiations with all other enemy countries: Italy would be obliged to keep up armaments whilst the other Allies were demobilizing, thus bringing about in Italy a state of general discontent which could not with safety be allowed to continue.'

After long discussion House proposed that Balfour's original proposition be accepted, on the understanding that 'similar proposals would be drawn up for the other enemy countries, with such alteration as might be necessary. The Conference would then, without delay, appoint the necessary Committees to deal with the various questions which still required to be examined and reported on.'

The House proposal did not commend itself to Balfour, who feared that it might delay the preparation of reports for the German settlement, because of lack of experts; Sonnino also disagreed with House, for he feared that this plan, al-

though ostensibly providing for work on the Austrian Treaty, would result in completing the German Treaty before the Austrian was ready. But the proposal offered the only possible compromise, and was accepted.

'It was clear to me,' wrote House in his diary that evening, 'that when Sonnino demanded amendments to the Balfour resolution, the German peace terms would be so entangled with the Austrian peace terms as to make for interminable delay. I therefore suggested segregation. Balfour was afraid of this because he did not think they had sufficient men to man so many different committees. I told him that England was so near that he certainly should be able to do this if we were able to do so.'

A further interesting change in the resolution was proposed by Mr. Lansing and adopted, to the effect that in the paragraph referring to the scope of the terms to be presented to Germany the words '*inter alia*' should be inserted.[1]

According to Colonel House's diary he suggested this to Mr. Lansing, in order to block any future attempt to exclude the League of Nations Covenant from the preliminary treaty. The formal resolution of the Peace Conference ensured its inclusion in the final treaty; but if the resolution on the terms of the preliminary treaty were too narrow, the argument could be made that it should not there appear.

'My thought was,' wrote House, 'that we would want to

[1] This made the paragraph read: 'The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the Naval, Military and Air Conditions, should cover *inter alia* the following points:

(a) the approximate future frontiers of —— (*for Germany only:* and the renunciation of colonial territories and treaty rights outside Europe);
(b) the financial conditions to be imposed on ——;
(c) the economic conditions to be accorded to ——;
(d) the responsibility for breaches of the laws of war.'

include in the [preliminary] treaty with Germany the Covenant for the League of Nations. I did not want to bring this up at the time, and I explained to Lansing that if we did, it would cause an interminable discussion with the French and that we had better merely leave room for that and any other subjects without mentioning them by name.'

Thus the Council decided to push as rapidly as possible the work on a general preliminary treaty with Germany. One criticism might be made of the policy which led to this decision; namely, that it would delay the military treaty, to the immediate drafting of which the Council was committed. This criticism was voiced by Lord Milner on February 24:

'Speaking for myself, personally, I still think that the final disarmament of Germany, I mean our bringing her down to that degree of strength for war purposes which we are willing to allow her permanently to maintain, is extremely urgent, that it is a step which we ought to take as soon as we possibly can, and that it is a step which when taken, will greatly expedite the acceptance, not only by Germany but by all our enemies, of all other conditions of peace. It is also an absolutely essential preliminary to our own demobilization on anything like the scale on which we all hope to demobilize . . .

'I do not wish to raise any further discussion over the Resolutions which we are just about to pass. But I hope I am justified in assuming that the passing of these Resolutions does not preclude us from proceeding at once to impose upon Germany those final military, naval and other conditions of a like nature, which Marshal Foch and his colleagues are at present discussing, if when we see them, they commend themselves to us. I hope in other words that it still remains free to any one of us to raise at that juncture the question of their immediate presentation.'

The discussion that followed Milner's statement left the question of a separate military treaty undecided, to depend upon whether the military experts presented the draft terms shortly and whether they proved satisfactory to the Council. As it turned out, the report of the committee of military experts was not ready before March 3, and the Council found so much to change in it that it was returned for revision. It was not until March 17, after Wilson's return, that the military terms finally 'commended themselves' to the Council, thus fulfilling Milner's conditions, and were approved. By that time the final economic and political conditions seemed so nearly ready that the idea of presenting a separate military treaty was tacitly dropped.[1]

IV

Mr. Balfour's speeding-up resolution thus did not, as Milner feared, postpone the formulation of the military terms, and it certainly furnished an impetus to solid work which became apparent in many directions. All the commissions agreed, as Tardieu expressed it, 'to make an effort.' Questions which could not be settled finally by commissions were isolated and analyzed by Clemenceau, Balfour, and House, who outside of the Council of Ten began to hold regular conferences similar in character to those preceding the Supreme War Council meetings at the time of the Armistice.

The reparations problem had been handed over to an expert Commission, of which Mr. Lamont, Mr. Norman Davis, Mr. Baruch, and Mr. Vance McCormick were the American members. The Commission divided into sub-committees to consider the questions of categories, or the nature of German responsibility for reparations, German capacity to pay, and methods of making Germany pay. In Wilson's absence the American members frequently consulted with House, who from the beginning advised a shelving of the question of

[1] See appendix to this chapter.

whether war costs and pensions should be included with direct damage in the reparations account, and a concentration upon the study of German capacity to pay. The pre-Armistice Agreement seemed to the Americans to make it plain that indirect war costs and pensions should not be included. House did not want to argue the matter, since he believed that a fair study of German capacity would show her practical inability to pay more than, or even as much as, the pre-Armistice Agreement called for.[1]

Unfortunately it proved just as difficult to reach agreement upon the question of German capacity. The French and the British had grossly exaggerated the sums which they could extract from Germany, and their early estimates exceeded those of the American experts by sums that ran into the hundreds of billion dollars.

'*February* 21, 1919: Thomas Lamont and Vance McCormick,' wrote House, 'came to report on the progress of the Committee on Reparations. They are getting along better and there is some reason to hope that they can bring in a report before a great while. The British now put in a tentative total demand on Germany of one hundred and twenty billion of dollars, and the French think Germany should pay a total of two hundred billion of dollars. In other words, the French

[1] The discussion over categories was nevertheless continued. House telegraphed to Wilson asking for his decision, and the President replied flatly refusing to approve the inclusion of indirect war costs, which were accordingly not included. The President later yielded to the arguments of General Smuts and agreed to approve the inclusion of pensions in the Reparation categories. See Mr. Lamont's statement in *What Really Happened at Paris* (Scribner, 1921), 271–72. The paraphrase of President Wilson's cable runs as follows: I feel that we are bound in honor to decline to agree to the inclusion of war costs in the reparation demanded. The time to think of this was before the conditions of peace were communicated to the enemy originally. We should dissent and dissent publicly if necessary not on the ground of the intrinsic injustice of it but on the ground that it is clearly inconsistent with what we deliberately led the enemy to expect and cannot now honorably alter simply because we have the power.

want Germany to pay two hundred times as much as the French paid the Germans in '71 and which the French then claimed to be excessive. They wish the payments to run for fifty-five years. . . .

'Our people think that the maximum cannot be over twenty-two billions of dollars and are inclined to believe that it should be under that amount.

'*February* 27, 1919: Davis and Lamont were pre-luncheon callers to report on the question of reparations. They came later this afternoon to again report and I advised them to agree to the sum of forty billions of dollars, but to hedge it around with safeguards, as far as the United States was concerned, so that in no event would we be either legally or morally bound to help enforce its collection.[1] That amount seems perfectly absurd. . . .'

Agreement was equally difficult in the matter of German boundaries. The French insisted that, for their security, the territories on the left bank of the Rhine must form a separate political entity. To this both Balfour and House were definitely opposed. At first House hoped that it would be possible to satisfy France by insisting upon the protection that she would receive from the League. Soon, however, he came to recognize the overwhelming force and unanimity of French feeling that future invasions by Germany must be made absolutely impossible by pushing Germany, at least in the military sense, behind the Rhine. He recognized the in-

[1] It was finally decided because of the French and British attitude not to insert any fixed sum in the treaty. 'M. Clemenceau,' writes Mr. Lamont, 'was the first of the Premiers — prompted in this instance by his Minister of the Treasury, M. Klotz — to make the declaration that whatever sum the "experts" might finally compromise and agree upon as the sum to demand from Germany, that would still fall far short of the expectations of the French populace; that no Government accepting such a sum as final could endure. Mr. Lloyd George, who never lent a deaf ear to political considerations, readily fell in with this point of view.' *What Really Happened at Paris*, 262.

evitability of compromise and agreed that until the Treaty stipulations were fulfilled and the League was recognized as an international force, the French ought to hold the bridgeheads and perhaps occupy the Rhinelands.

'*February* 9, 1919: [Conference with Balfour.] We talked at great length of the French proposal of setting up a "Rhenish Republic" as a buffer state between Germany and France. The French have but one idea and that is military protection. They do not seem to know that to establish a Rhenish Republic against the will of the people would be contrary to the principle of self-determination, and that if we should establish it, the people could at any time become federated with the other German States. If we did such a thing, we would be treating Germany in one way and the balance of the world in another. We would run the danger of having everything from the Rhine to the Pacific, perhaps including Japan, against the Western Powers. The Germans would at once begin to intrigue to bring about such a combination against England, France, and the United States. Their propaganda would be that England and the United States were undertaking to form an Anglo-Saxon supremacy of the world, and that we were using France as a pawn for the accomplishment of our purpose. . . .

Yet we both have a profound sympathy for France and for the unhappy situation in which she finds herself — a situation which is serious because there are practically two Germans to one Frenchman. The only hope France has for the future is the League of Nations and the spirit we hope to bring about through it. If after establishing the League, we are so stupid as to let Germany train and arm a large army and again become a menace to the world, we would deserve the fate which such folly would bring upon us.

'*February* 11, 1919: [Conference with Louis Aubert.[1]] The

[1] Distinguished publicist, at this time working with André Tardieu,

fact that there are two Germans to one Frenchman, and the further fact that Russia now feels more kindly toward Germany than she does toward France, makes the situation dangerous. I did not think, though, it could be improved by the plan which the French had in mind. It would be bad for France, as well as for England and the United States, to impose a wrong upon Germany, and it would react against us as the German wrong to France in '71 had reacted upon her. To do Germany an injustice would give her the sympathy of a large part of the world, particularly that part in close proximity to her. If the conditions we impose upon her are unjust, it will simply mean the breeding of another war. . . . Our only chance for peace, I thought, was to create a League of Nations, treat Germany fairly, and see that she did not have an opportunity to again equip and maintain an army that would be formidable.

'*February* 19, 1919: [Conference with Balfour.] Balfour was afraid we would get into difficulties with the French regarding the establishment of the Rhenish Republic upon which they are insistent. I thought perhaps a way out could be found. If Germany is not permitted to conscript men for the army for ten years, and if their present army is demobilized down to 150,000 men, there certainly can be no danger of an invasion of France. The French might occupy the bridgeheads of the Rhine until after Germany had fulfilled the obligations laid upon her by the Peace Treaty.

'*February* 23, 1919: I had a talk with André Tardieu in Vance McCormick's rooms at the Ritz. He said it was not the intention of the French to insist that the Rhenish Republic, of which Clemenceau spoke to me, should forever be barred from a union with Germany. That in five, ten or some other number of years, when the League of Nations was working as a protection against war, they would have no ob-

and in charge of the labors of the French High Commission corresponding to those of the Inquiry.

jection to its going where the inclination of the people might lead them. This of course relieves that question of one of its most objectionable features, since otherwise it would be quite contrary to the policy of self-determination.'

Besides these crucial problems that touched the German Treaty, a multitude of others demanded daily attention, some of them closely involved with the settlement, some relating to current policy. Belgium asked for preferential treatment in the matter of reparations and feared French influence in Luxembourg. What should be done with the interned German navy? Now that the Bolsheviks had refused to enter the Prinkipo Conference,[1] what attitude should the Allies assume? What arrangements should be made for getting food into Austria-Hungary and Germany? The quarrel between Italians and Jugo-Slavs was fast becoming acute. French credit was threatened and steps must be taken to save it. Could the League of Nations be actually put into operation to assist the Conference in meeting current issues? What form should the proceedings of the Conference take when the Germans were called in?

Of this welter of problems House daily sent word to the President. Agreement must be reached and quickly, and agreement was not possible except by compromise. How far ought a policy of compromise to be followed? If the Colonel's papers seem confused they represent, in that respect at least, an accurate reflection of the situation.

[1] An invitation had been extended by the Peace Conference to all the factions in Russia to meet in the island of Prinkipo to settle their differences. The Bolsheviks had refused.

V

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 23, 1919

George will not arrive in Paris until Friday, February 28th. No action will be taken respecting Russia until after his arrival. I have ascertained his views respecting this question and they are substantially as follows:

'No foreign intervention in Soviet Russia and no foreign troops to be sent to aid of non-Bolshevik Russia unless volunteers choose to go of their own accord, but material assistance to be supplied to these Governments to enable them to hold their own in the territories which are not anxious to submit to Bolshevik rule. Russia must save herself. If she is saved by outside intervention she is not really saved. We are bound to give moral, material, and if necessary military support to protect Poland, Finland, and other such states against Bolshevik invasion. The military party in France and England both favor intervention, but have absolutely declined to commit themselves as to how the expense thereof would be met. France surely cannot pay and I am sure we cannot either. Will America bear the expense?'

I do not think we shall have any difficulty reaching an agreement respecting our Russian policy after George arrives, inasmuch as his views apparently coincide with ours.[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 24, 1919

You have no doubt received the text of the separate resolutions adopted to-day regarding the preparation of prelimi-

[1] Three days before, on February 20, the President had sent a cable to House, of the first sentence of which the following is a paraphrase: I hope you will make plain that we are not at war with Russia and will in no circumstances that we can now foresee, take part in military operations there against the Russians.

nary peace terms with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey.[1]

1. General Bliss is working with the military authorities and their report will be cabled when the same has been prepared.

2. Our territorial experts are in substantial agreement with the British and the French respecting boundaries of Germany. Tardieu, who since attempt on Clemenceau's [life], has become more prominent, said to me yesterday that France would be willing to have the Rhenish Republic set up only for a limited period of years, at the end of which the population would be permitted to decide for themselves what their future should be. He said that in this way a breathing space would be given us all and France would secure protection until she recovered from the present war. The principle of self-determination would be in this way safeguarded.[2]

3. It now seems possible that we shall arrive at a solution of the reparation matter which we can accept without abandoning the principle accepted by Germany and the Allies at the time of the Armistice. In the event, however, that this principle is seriously threatened with repudiation by the Allies, it may be wise for us to intimate that, as we do not wish to impair in any respect the agreement between the Associated Governments and Germany at the time of the Armistice, we would prefer to withdraw from any participation in any recovery from Germany except to the extent of our own claims for reparation which we can satisfy out of the funds in the hands of the Alien Property Custodian. If this intimation is given it may be that the Allies will reconsider their position.

4. The statement of the economic conditions to be ac-

[1] *Supra*, 339.

[2] President Wilson did not at all agree with this. See below, p. 358, paraphrase of his cable of March 10 to Colonel House.

corded Germany will necessarily have to be made in general terms.

5. At the present time the plan we are pursuing is as follows: the giving of priority to the work of committees involving matters essential in the preparation of a peace treaty with Germany. Reports from these committees should be available by March 8th and should upon your arrival be in shape so that you can consider them without delay. After you have approved them they should be submitted to a Plenary Session of the Conference and an agreement of all of the Powers reached respecting them. If this procedure is followed it ought to be possible to summon the Peace Conference for a date not later than the first week of April.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 25, 1919

I suggest that you ask Mr. Taft to come and see you. He is the leader of those in the United States who are trying to sustain you in your fight for a League of Nations. Sincere congratulations over your admirable speech at Boston. It is commended here in the highest terms.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 26, 1919

1. George is desirous of arranging his engagements so that he can be in Paris at a time most advantageous from your standpoint. He can either come the latter part of this week and remain here for about a week or can be here on about March 14th and remain here for approximately ten days. His Labor Committee is expected to report on March 20th, but he can probably put off receiving this report for five or six days at the most, provided he is engaged in Conference in Paris during that time. I suggest that you authorize me to

express to him your hope that he arrive on March 14th and stay as long as practicable. Please cable me as soon as possible respecting this matter.

2. Last Monday night Pichon and Klotz called. They were very much disturbed over the French financial situation and stated that unless England furnished France with some sterling exchange almost immediately, there would be a serious break in the price of the French franc with disastrous results. They stated that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer would come to Paris if he could see me for a conference respecting this matter. I agreed to see him at any time he came. On Thursday at noon Klotz, Tardieu, and other French Treasury officials called on me and asked me to intervene at once with England so that France would be furnished immediately with a few million pounds of sterling exchange to tide them over until the Chancellor of the Exchequer could come to Paris for conference. I promised to do what I could. I at once took steps to point out to Lloyd George the unfortunate effect which would be caused by French financial difficulties at this time and I urged that some sterling exchange be given the French to tide them over their difficulties. George directed that this be done. Klotz expressed deep gratification of French Cabinet for this assistance. British Chancellor of the Exchequer will come to Paris early next week for conference.

3. Tardieu has submitted memorandum on French position respecting left bank of Rhine.[1] I will cable you about this fully when I have had an opportunity of studying it.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 27, 1919

I suggested to Balfour and Cecil this morning that we make an effort to start the League of Nations functioning at

[1] Published in *The Truth about the Treaty*, 147 ff.

once. They approved my plan, which is this: Let the Members of the Committee which formed the Covenant act as the provisional executive council proposed in the Covenant. Have the Council of Ten which sits at the Quai d'Orsay or the Plenary Conference refer certain matters to the League. Have the League report back to the Council of Ten or the Plenary Conference as the case may be, with recommendations. In the mean time it is our purpose to call in the neutrals and explain the Covenant to them and say that an invitation is soon to be extended to them to become members.

We will not call the Committee together unless the French, Japanese, and others agree not to offer any amendments to the Covenant until you return. I anticipate no difficulty in this. . . . Having an English-speaking Secretary-General will lessen our difficulties and not put us at such disadvantage as would a French or Italian Secretary-General. It would also enable us to take the Chairmanship of the Executive Council if we so desire. Please give me your views.

EDWARD HOUSE

Paraphrase of the President's Cablegram to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *March* 4, 1919

Your plan about starting the League of Nations to functioning at once disturbs me a little because I fear that some advantage would be given to the critics on this side of the water if they thought we were trying in that way to forestall action by the Senate and commit the country in some practical way from which it would be impossible to withdraw. If the plans you have in mind can be carried out with the explicit and public understanding that we are using this machinery provisionally and with no purpose of prejudicing any subsequent action, but merely for the purpose of facilitating the processes of the Peace Conference, perhaps this danger would disappear. The people of the United States are undoubtedly in favor of the League of Nations by an over-

whelming majority. I can say this with perfect confidence, but there are many forces, particularly those prejudiced against Great Britain, which are exercising a considerable influence against it, and you ought to have that constantly in mind in everything you do.[1]

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February* 27, 1919

At the request of the Belgians I am trying to get the French and English to agree to give Belgium a priority claim of five hundred million dollars so that she can negotiate a loan and immediately begin industrial activities. Balfour says the British will be sympathetic to the plan. I shall present it to the French to-morrow. Balfour and I also have agreed to talk with Clemenceau within a few days concerning Luxembourg. We shall ask him to keep hands off and let Luxembourg determine for herself whether or not she wishes an economic or even closer union with Belgium.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*February* 28, 1919: Signor Crespi, Italian Minister of Finance, . . . wished to tell about the difficulties with the Jugo-Slavs, and the controversy he was having with Hoover over supplying a sufficient number of food trains for Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slav territories. I suggested that as soon as the President returned we will try to come to an understanding as to the delineation of the territory between the Jugo-Slavs and Italy.

'*March* 1, 1919: We had an interesting session at the Quai d'Orsay for the reason that Clemenceau presided for the first

[1] On the same day that the President sent this, and before Colonel House received it, the latter cabled to Wilson: 'We have not yet found a satisfactory way to make the League of Nations function as I suggested, and nothing will be done till after your arrival. In the mean time we will try to shepherd the neutrals into the fold.'

time since he was shot. I notice a marked difference in him as a presiding officer now that he is trying to speed up our work. We finished in something like an hour. In ordinary times we would have been at it all afternoon and perhaps carried the work over for another day.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March* 1, 1919

The French Minister of Finance has agreed to give Belgium priority on five hundred millions provided the British will assent to the principle that valuables or their equivalent taken from the Allied countries should also have priority. I shall take the matter up with the British in a few days.[1]

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March* 1, 1919

I got in communication with Lloyd George by telephone. He thinks that it is essential for you to come directly to Paris as soon as possible. His difficulties with the coal miners and other laborers culminate around the 24th or 25th of March and it will be necessary for him to return to England by then. If you arrive in Paris by the 13th or 14th we both believe it may be possible to settle the preliminary peace terms with Germany by the 23d and name a day for the regular Peace Congress in which the Central Powers are to participate. I have April 2d tentatively in mind for the assembling of the Congress. The preliminary peace terms for Austria should also be ready early in April. The Brussels trip can be taken

[1] This priority was assured to Belgium by the Peace Treaty. Clemenceau later declared in the Senate: 'We have not obtained priority for our own reparations . . . and yet, at a critical moment, Belgium having great need of us, I pleaded for her and obtained for her a priority payment of two and one-half billions [of francs].' See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 226.

during the interim between the call of the Peace Congress and its date of assembling. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March* 4, 1919

. . . The situation in Germany, particularly in Bavaria, is extremely critical and I have tried to impress both the British and French with the necessity of getting food into these countries immediately. After a conference with Clemenceau and Balfour we agreed to bring the question of supplying Bohemia before the Council of Ten to-morrow. Clemenceau asked that he be given a short time to bring the French public to a realization of the importance of sending food into Germany, when he promises earnest coöperation with us in that direction.

Balfour and I also took up with Clemenceau the question of Luxembourg. He has agreed to withdraw the French troops stationed there and I shall confer with Pershing on Thursday as to whether American troops shall occupy it.

Everything has been speeded up and I feel confident that by the time of your arrival all questions will be ready for your approval.

Lloyd George is expected here to-morrow night.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*March* 4, 1919: I took up with Clemenceau and Balfour the method of procedure at Versailles when the Germans arrive. Within the last few days I have thought that we should not call the regular Peace Conference, at which there would be all the belligerents in the late war, until after the Germans have accepted our terms. I suggested that we ask the Germans to be at Versailles immediately after the 20th. When we have completed our terms, we would hold a Plenary Meeting of the Allies at the Quai d'Orsay in the morning and

pass upon the Treaty as we and the Allies have drawn it. At this Plenary Session a committee should be appointed to go to Versailles and present the Treaty to the German plenipotentiaries. They in turn would have to go to Berlin for consultation with their Government. When they returned, our committee should meet them at Versailles for the purpose of signing the document and for no other purpose.

'It is to be remembered that we are not holding a Peace Conference at present, but merely a conference between the Allies and ourselves for the purpose of agreeing upon terms to offer Germany at the Peace Conference to be held later.

'If we did not adopt some such method there would be an interminable lot of speeches and confusion. If the Germans were invited into a general peace conference for discussion, the President would speak, Lloyd George would speak, Orlando undoubtedly would wish to tell his people in Italy what he thought of the matter, Venizelos and nearly every other head of a delegation would demand a hearing, and he, Clemenceau, would want to tell the people of France what he thought about it. Clemenceau held up his hands and said, "No, not I, not I." Nevertheless he and Balfour agreed that the method which I proposed should be carried out because it was the most expeditious thing to do.'

VI

'*March* 6, 1919: The most interesting feature of the day was lunch with Lloyd George at his apartment. . . . I thought that if the British did not consent to the sinking of the German fleet instead of partitioning it, it would lead to a large naval programme in America and that England and the United States would be in the same attitude toward one another in the future as England and Germany had been in the past. He readily recognized this, and asked me to say this at the Quai d'Orsay when the question came up. . . .

'We agreed to send for Orlando immediately, and that he (Lloyd George), Clemenceau, and Orlando should thresh out everything before the President came and arrive at decisions. The President could agree or point out wherein his views were not as ours. In this way matters might be greatly expedited.

'*March* 7, 1919: Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I met at the Ministry of War this morning at 10.30. . . .

'We did our work rapidly and both George and Clemenceau felt encouraged that so much could be done so quickly. It was agreed that we should meet again in a day or two to decide matters before going to the Quai d'Orsay. . . .

'I shall leave to the *procès-verbal* the details of the meeting of the Council of Ten at the Quai d'Orsay. We were in session from three until nearly six o'clock and it was a stormy session — stormier, indeed, than the *procès-verbal* will indicate. However, it was a good lesson inasmuch as it proved how essential it is to have meetings in advance, as George, Clemenceau, and I had this morning. The matters that came up this afternoon [which were considered in the morning] were decided almost immediately and with but little discussion, and the question of feeding Austria, which the three of us did not decide beforehand, took practically the entire afternoon.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March* 7, 1919

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I in conference this morning discussed the following subjects:

1. The distribution of the sum which Germany is to be called upon to pay. George said he could not sustain himself with his people if on a question of priority all of this sum should go to France and Belgium for reparation. He suggested that it be apportioned as follows: three parts for

reparation and two parts for costs of war.[1] France, Belgium, and all countries at war with Germany should participate in these two parts as well as Great Britain. I thought this proposal of George fair, but there must be no demand on Germany inconsistent with our terms of armistice with Germany and the Fourteen Points. Clemenceau seemed to think the proposal just, but reserved final judgment until he could consult his financial experts.

2. We took up the question of feeding Germany and Clemenceau did not disagree with the plan which George and I presented from our experts. However, Germany has refused to turn over any shipping until a satisfactory plan has been mutually agreed upon which will provide food until next harvest.

3. The left bank of the Rhine was discussed, but no tentative agreement was reached.[2] . . .

4. The naval terms declared for the dismemberment, or sinking of the German ships, but the French made reservation in favor of partitioning them amongst the Allies. The British were on the point of yielding to this, but I told George that we could never consent to the British augmenting their navy so largely; if this were done it would surely lead to American and British rivalry in this direction. We finally agreed that the ships should be partitioned but that Great Britain, the United States, and Japan should sink those coming to them.

5. In discussing the dismemberment of the Turkish Em-

[1] The proposal was not understood by House to mean that a demand would be made on Germany for payment of indirect war costs; as House stated two sentences later: 'There must be no demand on Germany inconsistent with our terms of armistice with Germany.' Lloyd George's proposal concerned merely the basis of the division of reparations among the Allies.

[2] President Wilson cabled in reply to this on March 10. The paraphrase of his cable runs in part: I hope you will not even provisionally consent to the separation of the Rhenish Provinces from Germany under any arrangement, but will reserve the whole matter until my arrival.

pire both Clemenceau and George expressed the wish that we accept mandatories for Armenia and Constantinople. I thought the United States would be willing when the proposal was brought before them.

6. George was unwilling to accept that clause in our military terms to Germany relating to conscription. He offered a substitute which Clemenceau and I accepted, which provided for a volunteer army of 200,000, the period of service to be for twelve years. This was afterwards adopted by the Council of Ten this afternoon. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

'*March* 8, 1919: Admiral Benson came to tell of his labors with the Allied Admirals in the matter which Lloyd George and I referred to them about the distribution and sinking of German ships. . . .

'The meeting at the Quai d'Orsay was a repetition of that of yesterday, only France was in the position of Italy the day before. Yesterday the French saw quite clearly that the Italians were obstructing the sending of necessary food into the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, while to-day the Italians saw just as clearly that the French were trying to obstruct the sending of food into Germany. We sat for four hours before reaching a conclusion.

'*March* 10, 1919: [Conference with Clemenceau and Lloyd George.] We agreed upon another committee to delineate the boundary lines of Germany. . . . Clemenceau named Tardieu, I named Mezes, and Lloyd George, Philip Kerr. I earnestly urged that after the President's return the Quai d'Orsay meetings should be, if not discontinued, held only at intervals, and that the three Prime Ministers and the President should continue the meetings we have held in the President's absence. . . .

'We discussed the question of the boundary between Italy and Austria on the northeast, and that of the Jugo-

Slavs in Dalmatia. I had with me a map showing the London Treaty, and the recommendations of our experts. Both Clemenceau and George were in favor of our line rather than the London Treaty. None of us thought that Italy should have the Tyrol. . . . Neither of them were in favor of giving the Italians Fiume, but thought, as a compromise, it might be internationalized.

'George and I discussed the sinking of the German ships, and he said that an agreement between Great Britain and the United States must be reached not to rival one another in naval building.[1]

'*March* 12, 1919: It has been a most interesting day. Orlando called around ten o'clock to confer upon the various phases of the Italian situation. He remained for nearly an hour. . . . I foresee trouble for him because Lloyd George and Clemenceau are not [even as] sympathetic with their demands as the President and I, and we are nowhere near agreement with them. I pledged him to Switzerland as the seat of the League of Nations.

'In the afternoon I went to the Quai d'Orsay, where the air terms were taken up. Lloyd George asked to see me in the anteroom and we went out and talked for nearly a half-hour. He said he was seriously troubled concerning the French. In the first place, he could not agree with them upon the question of the boundary of the Rhine and the creation of a Rhenish Republic upon the terms they had in mind. He was willing to give them protection in other directions. . . . He would also be willing to say that in the event of an invasion, the British would come at once to the rescue, but he was not willing to maintain an army indefinitely at the bridgeheads of the Rhine and to do the other things the French desired which we both agree will eventually lead to another war.

[1] See *infra*, p. 418, for the later discussions which may be regarded as originating the idea of the Washington Conference.

'He said the financial question was another difficulty. . . .

'Another difficulty is Syria. George declares the French are making trouble for themselves and war is sure to come if they insist upon their present plans. . . .

'Clemenceau came a little after five. He was distressed at the turn matters were taking with the British. . . .'

VII

So far as the energy of the Conference was concerned, no criticism could be passed on the work of February and early March. The absence of President Wilson and the British and Italian Prime Ministers did not prevent the development of a sound and swiftly operating organization. A few weeks later, Steed wrote of this period, in the London *Times:* 'During their absence Colonel House, who has never found a difficulty in working with his colleagues, because he is a selfless man with no personal axe to grind, brought matters rapidly forward.' The commissions assigned to the different problems had progressed far. On February 27, House wrote in his diary: 'I am delighted with the way things are going.'

But as the expert commissions separated essentials from unessentials, it became clear that the conflict between the various solutions advanced by the British, French, and Americans was so real that no agreement could be reached without very broad concessions on all sides. The chance of imposing the American point of view as contained in the Fourteen Points had passed. An unbending insistence by President Wilson on his programme would precipitate an open quarrel with the European Prime Ministers. They protested that if they yielded it would mean the overthrow of their Governments. All were caught in a net of circumstances which made free and reasonable decisions impossible. Tales of confusion in Central Europe, Russia, the Far East, the Near East, complicated the problems at Paris. The only

chance of improvement lay in rapid settlement, and the only chance of rapid settlement lay in compromise. So much House confessed to his diary on March 3.

'It is now evident,' he wrote, 'that the peace will not be such a peace as I had hoped, or one which this terrible upheaval should have brought about. There are many reasons why it will not be one. . . .

'The American Delegation are not in a position to act freely. The elections of last November in the United States have been a deterrent to free action by our delegates. The British elections and the vote of confidence Clemenceau received in the French Chamber of Deputies, put the finishing touches to a situation already bad. If the President should exert his influence among the liberals and laboring classes, he might possibly overthrow the Governments in Great Britain, France, and Italy; but if he did, he would still have to reckon with our own people and he might bring the whole world into chaos. The overthrow of governments might not end there, and it would be a grave responsibility for any man to take at this time.

'I dislike to sit and have forced upon us such a peace as we are facing. We will get something out of it in the way of a League of Nations, but even that is an imperfect instrument. . . . All our Commissioners, experts, and economists tell of the same *impasse* and come almost hourly for consultation. . . . The situations are many in number and both varied and complex in character. It is Archangel and Murmansk at one moment, the left bank of the Rhine the next, Asia Minor, the African Colonies, the Chinese-Japanese differences, the economic situation as to raw materials, the food situation as it affects the various countries of Europe, enemy and neutral, and the financial situation as it relates to the United States, and the Allies. These are some of the many questions which are constantly brought up.'

On March 14, President Wilson landed at Brest. He found that the Conference had made enormous progress in the month of his absence, in the sense that the committees were ready to report and the main questions had been reduced to a point where, provided concessions were made to the French or British point of view, decisions might be reached very quickly. But if he would not yield, the Conference might be indefinitely prolonged. No commitments had been made for him in his absence.

The President faced a difficult problem. Should he compromise and, if so, to what extent?

APPENDIX

In Chapters XVI and XVII of his *Woodrow Wilson and the World War*, Mr. R. S. Baker reviews some of the incidents related in the above chapter and reaches the conclusion that they give evidence of an attempt to sidetrack the League of Nations and settle important issues contrary to Wilson's wishes during the President's absence from Paris.

Mr. Baker's thesis is that the moment the President left Paris, the anti-Wilson forces mobilized; the resolutions presented by Mr. Balfour on February 22, calling for speeding-up of work on economic and territorial problems connected with the German Treaty, he regards as an attempt to frustrate the proposal for an immediate military treaty, which the Council and Mr. Wilson in particular had approved. He accuses Mr. Balfour of presenting the resolutions under instructions from Lloyd George, who 'began to think he had gone too far with this League business.' Colonel House, he avers, yielded to Mr. Balfour's suggestion because he did not wish to enter into a quarrel with the Allies and because 'there was nothing hard, clear, sure, definite in his intellectual processes.' Mr. Balfour's suggestion of hastening decisions on points other than the military terms, Mr. Baker insists, 'would wreck the entire American scheme for the peace. . . . Thus while it is too much to say that there was a direct plot, while Wilson was away, to kill the League or even cut it out of the Treaty, one can affirm with certainty that there was an intrigue against his plan of a preliminary military and naval peace — which would have indirectly produced the same result.' [1]

The charges against the British representatives, particularly Lord Balfour, are so serious that in justice to the Allies they demand careful examination.

In 1922, when Mr. Baker's chapters first appeared in print, they were brought to Lord Balfour's attention by Colonel House. 'If my memory

[1] Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 295, 296, 306.

serves me rightly,' wrote House, 'you and I were moved solely by a desire to accelerate the Treaty, and we were acting as much upon my initiative as your own.' At the suggestion of Lord Balfour there was prepared in the British Foreign office a memorandum covering the charges that had been raised. This he sent to Colonel House and it is here published, with the consent of the Foreign Office, together with two explanatory letters from Lord Balfour.

Lord Balfour to Colonel House

LONDON, *July* 17, 1922

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE —

I have been a long time answering your letter, but the reasons for the delay will be obvious from what follows.

Since I received it I asked —— to look into the matter. He very kindly acceded to my request, and has written an able and elaborate report upon it, which I send herewith for your confidential information.

This disposes, I think conclusively, of the charges contained in Mr. Baker's article. But the whole incident raises a problem of considerable difficulty.

Mr. Wilson, entirely oblivious of the pledges of secrecy with regard to the records of what passed in the Supreme Council and the Council of Four — pledges of which I believe he was the most ardent advocate — has handed over all the papers to a friend of his, Mr. Baker, in order to provide material for a series of articles in the New York *Times*.[1] I have no reason to believe that Mr. Baker the least desires to misuse the confidential information which had been thus placed at his disposal; but he writes, I imagine, with a purpose — a very legitimate purpose — of doing justice to Mr. Wilson's work in Paris. He has, I understand, little opportunity of comparing notes with those who were there; and, in such circumstances, it is not unnatural that he should do less than justice to other actors in the drama. As you point out, he was certainly wrong in his statement that Mr. Wilson was kept in ignorance by me of the Secret Treaties, — an error which I feel the more acutely, because it is a calumny which, if I remember rightly, I have already publicly contradicted. He is also wrong in the account of what passed during President Wilson's absence in America, contained in the copy of the New York *Times* which you sent me. Whether he has committed other errors of importance, I do not know, as the articles, so far, have not been brought to my notice. You and I and, I should imagine, most of those who worked together in Paris are, or may be, the victims of these doubtless unintentional misrepresentations. How are they to be dealt with?

The first answer that suggests itself is that the articles should be studied one by one as they come out, and compared with the documents on which they profess to be founded. But there are one or two practical objections to this course of the most serious kind. The records which

[1] The articles referred to were chapters from *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, which were first published in serial form.

have to be gone through are immense in bulk, and to hunt down particular errors and misrepresentations at this distance of time may involve considerable labour. —— could, of course, do it better than anybody else; but he is a very hard-worked man, and though he has most kindly dealt in a very able fashion with the particular point raised in your letter, we can hardly ask him, in ordinary circumstances, to repeat the operation.

And there is yet a further difficulty. How are we to deal with the refutation when we have got it? I should, in any case, be reluctant to engage in a newspaper controversy on the other side of the Atlantic. But, quite apart from this, we can only refute errors professedly based upon confidential documents by ourselves making use of these documents. And how can we do this without committing the very error which Mr. Wilson has committed, and of which we, who loyally worked with him in Paris, think we have some reason to complain? We certainly could not do so without asking the other Governments of the Allied and Associated Powers, and perhaps not without asking the survivors among those who took a leading part in the discussions, of which these are the confidential records. On the other hand, to allow historic errors to be disseminated on the authority of a writer who justly claims to have access to the original sources of information, and to leave these errors uncontradicted, would be interpreted by the malevolent, and perhaps by the indifferent, as an admission of guilt.

I was absolutely open in 1917 with President Wilson about the Secret Treaties; the last thing that you and I thought of in 1919 was to take advantage of President Wilson's temporary absence in America to reverse his policy. I am charged, it seems, with both these crimes; you are charged with the second. Are we to remain silent? If we protest, what form should our protest take? I am in perplexity as to how these questions should be answered, and should much like to have your advice on the subject.

I hope you and Mrs. House are keeping well. It is a great disappointment not seeing you this summer. We should have had much to talk about.

Yours ever

BALFOUR

LONDON, *July 28th*, 1927

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I hear that you wish to publish the memorandum on the subject of the charges made by Mr. Ray Stannard Baker in regard to certain proceedings at the Paris Peace Conference, which I sent for your confidential information with my private letter of July 17th, 1922.

In that letter I set forth in full the difficulties I felt in rebutting these charges. Mr. Stannard Baker's articles were based on a partial use of some of the proceedings of the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference, which all concerned had agreed to treat as confidential, but which President Wilson had inadvertently allowed Mr. Baker to use, and even to

quote in writing his articles. I pointed out that we could only rebut his charges by ourselves making use of the same material as he, in which case we should fall into the very error which Mr. Wilson had committed in entrusting these proceedings to Mr. Baker, and of which we felt some reason to complain.

Five years, however, have now passed. Some of the participators in these events have died. But Mr. Baker's charges have never been rebutted, and are perhaps believed by some of those who have read his articles. I think that in the interests of international amity it is necessary to show that the negotiations with which Mr. Baker's article is concerned were in fact conducted with good will on all sides, in a spirit of mutual frankness, and without any of those implications of intrigue with which Mr. Baker credits them.

I do not think it possible that harm can be done to the reputation or memory of any one concerned in these transactions by the publication of the memorandum which I sent to you in 1922. I therefore remove the ban which I placed in my previous letter and authorise you, if you think fit, to publish the memorandum in your memoirs.

Yours ever

BALFOUR

P.S. I must ask that in publishing my letter of July 17th, 1922, and this letter (if you decide to publish it) you will omit ——'s name, leaving a blank space where it is mentioned in each case.

Memorandum

'The suggestion that there was anything savouring even remotely of a plot against the League of Nations in President Wilson's absence is supported by no evidence whatsoever. "The League was scarcely mentioned in the conferences until just before the President returned," complains Mr. Baker. Why? Because the text of the Covenant had been formally laid before the Peace Conference in Plenary Session by President Wilson, as Chairman of the appropriate Commission of the Conference, on February 14th the day before he sailed for America. To tamper with it in the absence of the President, one of its principal authors, was unnecessary and undesirable. Its further consideration and final acceptance was reserved until after Mr. Wilson's return.

'An insinuation which in Mr. Baker's article follows closely on the extract quoted above is that the British Empire Delegation became militaristic; that this is proved by Mr. Churchill having been sent to the Peace Conference, and by the fact that Sir Robert Borden sat in the Supreme Council.

'The facts are that Mr. Churchill was present at precisely three meetings of the Council, namely on Friday, February 14th, Saturday, February 15th, and Monday, February 17th, after which he returned home. He was there not to discuss the Peace Treaty, but for the consideration of allied policy towards Russia, a question of great military importance in which Mr. Churchill's Department — the War Office — were specially concerned. Throughout the Conference it was the practice of the British

Government to attach Ministers to the Delegation, whose Departments were specially interested in the questions being discussed whenever they could be spared. Thus, Mr. Chamberlain, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Law Officers of the Crown, Lord Milner, who was Colonial Secretary, etc. were at different times attached to the Delegation although they were not plenipotentiaries. Mr. Churchill's presence was merely an application of a well-recognised procedure.[1]

As regards Sir Robert Borden, no one could possibly accuse him of being militaristic. Neither could he have been considered as hostile to the League of Nations of which he has always been a warm partisan — and part of Mr. Baker's suggestion is that there was an attempt at this time to subvert the Covenant of the League. As a matter of fact Sir Robert Borden took Lord Milner's place as 'second string' during the Prime Minister's absence in London at precisely one meeting of the Supreme Council, viz. on February 18th.

'The main point, however, which Mr. Baker seeks to make is that Mr. Wilson wished to have a preliminary naval and military peace with Germany, and that after he had left, there was a plot to get rid of this plan. There is the further suggestion that Mr. Balfour aided and abetted the plot to get rid of it by a proposal he made shortly after for expediting the work of the Commissions on other branches of the Peace Treaty, and that he was inspired to do this by Mr. Lloyd George who had returned to London, and suffered 'one of his characteristic catapultic changes of opinion.' Dealing first with the latter point, the records of the British Government provide no evidence that the Prime Minister changed his mind in the smallest degree. In fact, the Prime Minister during his absence in London never hampered Mr. Balfour by any instructions at all. He left an entirely free hand to a colleague who knew his views and shared them. Any action which Mr. Balfour took in coöperation with others in order to speed up the completion of the peace treaties was taken entirely on his own initiative, though, of course, the Prime Minister and his colleagues were kept fully informed.

'Coming to the main charge referred to above, it is necessary to recall exactly what did occur during this period.

'Early in February, 1919, the German Armistice became due for renewal and as usual, a number of proposals were made for stiffening its terms. President Wilson and other members of the Supreme Council felt that these additions to the Armistice were only a source of additional pin-pricks to Germany, which cumulatively might result in serious trouble. Eventually, a special Commission, under the Presidency of

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[1] As a matter of fact the *procès-verbal* shows that instead of bringing Mr. Churchill to Paris to exploit Wilson's absence, especial pains were taken to bring him to Paris before Wilson left. The *procès-verbal* reads: 'Mr. Churchill said that . . . in view of the imminent departure of President Wilson, the Cabinet had asked him to go over and obtain some decision as to the policy on this matter [Russia].' After attending three meetings of the Council (at one of which Wilson was present) he left Paris two days after Wilson sailed. [Note by C. S.]

Marshal Foch, composed partly of military advisers of the Government and partly of their economic advisers, was appointed to report on the position. On this Commission the British Government was represented by Lord Robert Cecil and General Thwaites, the French Government by M. Clementel and General Degoutte, the American Government by General Bliss and Mr. Norman Davis and the Italian Government by M. Crespi and General Cavallero. The report of the Commission, which was considered by the Supreme Council on February 12th, 1919, ended with the following recommendation:

'"Nevertheless the members of the Committee desire to express their opinion that to obtain as rapidly as possible, a final result, and to put a stop to the difficulties constantly raised by the Germans, the members of the Commission consider that naval and military terms of peace should be drawn up immediately by a Commission appointed for the purpose and imposed on the enemy."

'When this proposal was discussed at the Supreme Council, Mr. Balfour made the suggestion that "only essential small changes or no changes whatever should be made in the Armistice until the Allies were prepared to say to Germany: 'these are the final naval and military terms of peace which you must accept in order to enable Europe to demobilise and so to resume its life on a peace footing and reëstablish its industries.'"

'President Wilson went further and suggested the renewal of the Armistice on the present terms for a period which would be terminated on a few days' notice and that meanwhile the final military and naval terms of peace should be drawn up and presented separately to the Germans for acceptance on the understanding that nonacceptance of the whole of the terms would mean an immediate resumption of hostilities.

'M. Clemenceau at first strongly protested and urged that the military terms could not be separated from the political, economic and financial terms. At the end of the morning meeting on February 12th, Mr. Balfour put President Wilson's idea into the form of resolutions. These were considered the same afternoon when President Wilson further developed his idea that the military terms of peace should be isolated from the other conditions of peace.

'"He therefore thought it was possible to frame the terms of Germany's disarmament before settling the Terms of Peace. He was encouraged in this belief by the assurance that the Military Advisers could produce a plan in forty-eight hours. It might take more than forty-eight hours for the heads of Governments to agree to this plan."

'M. Clemenceau demurred at some length at the idea of discussing a matter of such importance in the absence of the President who was about to return to America on a visit. To this, President Wilson replied that —

'"In technical matters most of the brains he used were borrowed; the possessors of these brains were in Paris. He would, therefore, go away with an easy mind if he thought that his plan had been adopted in principle. He had complete confidence in the views of his Military Advisers. . . . If his plan were agreed on in principle, he would be prepared to go away and leave it to his colleagues to decide whether the programme drafted by the technical advisers was the right one. He did

not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent a work as the preparation of a Preliminary Peace. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. But he did not wish that during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up. He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away."

'After some further discussion, the Supreme Council accepted part of Mr. Balfour's draft conclusions, which included the following:

'"Detailed and final Naval, Military and Air Conditions of the Preliminaries of Peace shall be drawn up at once by a Committee to be presided over by Marshal Foch and submitted for approval to the Supreme War Council; these, when approved, will be presented for signature to the Germans, and the Germans shall be at once informed that this is the policy of the Associated Governments."

'This ends the first phase of the period covered by Mr. Baker's article, namely that prior to the President's departure, in which it is desired to draw attention more particularly to the following points:

'The first idea of a Preliminary Naval and Military Peace was put forward not by Mr. Balfour or President Wilson, but by a Joint Committee of Military and Economic experts, including Lord Robert Cecil, M. Clementel and Mr. Norman Davis: Mr. Balfour supported the idea; President Wilson pressed it, and Mr. Balfour put it into the shape of resolutions; Mr. Clemenceau, though he did not much like it, finally accepted it; the idea at the time was that the military men would only require forty-eight hours to draw up the terms though it was admitted that the politicians would require longer to consider them: at any rate, only a short period was contemplated; President Wilson left the matter in the hands of his own substitutes with perfect confidence.

'We now come to the second stage, i.e. the period of President Wilson's absence from Paris. On February 22nd, ten days after the proceedings described above, the Military Report on the Naval and Military Conditions of Peace was still awaited. The original forty-eight hours contemplated by the President had already extended to ten days and still the report was incomplete. The subject was still with Marshal Foch's Commission. Until their report emerged, nothing more could be done by the Council of Ten. A good deal of the remainder of the work of the Conference was sticking. It was in these circumstances that Mr. Balfour put forward his resolutions for expediting the remainder of the work of the Conference. The resolutions were shown to and agreed by Colonel House and several other members before being formally presented to the Supreme Council.

'In introducing his resolutions before the Supreme Council on February 22nd, Mr. Balfour pointed out that —

'"A general feeling of impatience was now becoming manifest in all countries on account of the apparent slow progress the Conference was making in the direction of Final Peace. It would be folly to ignore altogether the danger that feeling might produce. . . ."

'Later in his speech he said that —

"he had that morning, in company with M. Pichon, discussed the ques-

tion with M. Clemenceau,[1] who inclined to the view that the Naval and Military Terms of Peace should not be separated from the other aspects of the case. M. Clemenceau was extremely anxious to expedite matters, but he thought that end would be best obtained by waiting until a conclusion had been reached on all subjects. M. Clemenceau held the view that if the stimulus towards a rapid decision were removed by the acceptance of the Naval and Military Terms by Germany, the other questions would be delayed for an infinity of time by small controversies."

'Mr. Balfour added that he personally,

"was in favour of his own proposal, but would be glad to hear the views of his colleagues."

'That Mr. Balfour was not committed in any way to a view against the original idea of presenting the final Naval and Military Terms in advance of the rest of the Peace Treaty to Germany, is proved by the first clause of his resolutions, which runs as follows:

'"(1) *Without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace to Germany at an early date*,[2] the Conference agrees that it is desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of other Preliminary Peace Terms with Germany and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed."

'From the words in italics, it will be seen how careful Mr. Balfour was, in drafting the resolutions intended to expedite the general work of the Conference, to avoid prejudicing the plan to present separate naval and military terms of peace.

'Mr. Balfour's colleagues in the Supreme Council, however, were inclining to a different view. M. Pichon emphasised M. Clemenceau's desire to press on the whole of the Preliminary Peace Terms and stated that M. Clemenceau was warmly supported by Marshal Foch and his Military Advisers. Colonel House in the course of his first speech is recorded to have spoken as follows: —

'"In regard to the two proposals now before the Conference, very severe military terms would have to be imposed on the Germans. And, he thought, the Germans would be more inclined to accept those conditions if, at the same time, the whole Peace terms were made known to them. The Germans would then be made fully cognisant of their position."

'Mr. Lansing was even more definite.

'"Mr. Lansing expressed the view that it would be a mistake to treat the Military Terms of Peace as distinct from the other terms of Peace. He would prefer to embody all the terms of a Preliminary Peace in one document: a separate treaty being made with each of the enemy countries on identic lines. . . .

'"He was strongly of the opinion that when Peace terms came to be discussed with Germany, a complete document should be presented, including everything, and not merely a few Naval, Military and other conditions. He thoroughly agreed with M. Clemenceau's point of view."

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[1] This was shortly after the attempted assassination of M. Clemenceau [C. S.].

[2] The italics are not in the original.

'Later on,

'"Mr. House enquired whether the Conference agreed to accept M. Clemenceau's proposal that all the terms of Peace should be dealt with together, instead of first dealing with the Military terms."

'"Mr. Balfour said he would be prepared to accept that proposal, provided it expressed the unanimous view of the Conference."

'Note again how cautious Mr. Balfour's language was in expressing agreement to over-ride the original proposal for the presentation of separate Naval, Military and Air terms of peace. He would only agree provided the Council was unanimous.

'During the discussion on this day, Saturday, February 22nd, the words already quoted at the head of Mr. Balfour's resolution, namely, "without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace to Germany at an early date," were dropped out. This was done, not on Mr. Balfour's, but on Mr. Lansing's suggestion. Mr. Lansing's object was to have a text which could be made to apply to all the enemy countries, a separate resolution being drawn up for each country. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Balfour evidently formed the impression that the original idea to present separate Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace had been thrown overboard, for towards the end of the discussion he is recorded as saying:

'"Mr. Balfour thought that a decision had been reached that the Conference should not proceed with the Military Terms of Peace as a separate proposal. . . ."

'On the Monday following, namely, February 24th, the discussion of this subject was resumed and the Supreme Council had before them redrafts of Mr. Balfour's proposal, prepared in accordance with Mr. Lansing's proposal referred to above. On this occasion there were four separate but practically identical resolutions applying the speeding-up process to Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as to Germany, this being a point on which Baron Sonnino had insisted with great force.

'This was the occasion on which Lord Milner, who at the previous meeting had spoken briefly in favour of pushing on with the Naval and Military Terms with Germany, made the speech quoted in Mr. Stannard Baker's article. His plea was undoubtedly a strong one and perhaps it should be repeated here:

'"Speaking for myself, personally I still think that the final disarmament of Germany— I mean our bringing her down to that degree of strength for war purposes which we are willing to allow her permanently to maintain— is extremely urgent; that it is a step which we ought to take as soon as we possibly can; and that it is a step which when taken, will greatly expedite the acceptance, not only by Germany, but by all our enemies, of all other conditions of peace. It is also an absolutely essential preliminary to our own demobilisation on anything like the scale on which we all hope to demobilise." "Till Saturday last I thought we were all agreed upon this. Now I feel some doubt about it."

'Most of the above is quoted by Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, but the following passage is not:

'"*I do not wish to raise any further discussion over the resolutions which*

we are just about to pass.[1] But I hope I am justified in assuming that the passing of these resolutions does not preclude us from proceeding at once to impose on Germany those military, naval and other conditions of a like nature, which Marshal Foch and his colleagues are at present discussing, *if, when we see them they commend themselves to us.*[1] I hope in other words, that it still remains free to any one of us to raise at that juncture the question of their immediate presentation."

'This statement gave rise to some discussion, the result of which was in effect to leave open the question of whether separate Naval, Military and Air Terms were to be imposed until the Council had seen the report of Marshal Foch's Committee. It was on this understanding that the resolution for speeding up the various Treaties of Peace were passed.

'It will be seen from the above that Lord Milner, in fact, took much the same view as Mr. Balfour. Mr. Balfour had carefully safeguarded the position in his original draft resolutions on which, of course, Lord Milner had been consulted. Mr. Balfour had eventually consented, though somewhat reluctantly, in the course of discussion, to the proposals of his colleagues on the Supreme Council, to drop the idea of separate Naval and Military conditions being presented to Germany, but, after Lord Milner's intervention, the question still remained an open one, pending examination of the terms to be presented by Marshal Foch's Committee. It should be noted however that Lord Milner's words are very guarded. He does not oppose the speeding-up resolution, on which, indeed, he had been consulted beforehand. His proposal to put forward separate Naval, Military and Air Terms, is conditioned by the words "if, when we see them, they commend themselves to us." It will now be shown that this latter condition was not fulfilled until several weeks had elapsed.

'The Military Terms first came before the Supreme Council on March 3rd, that is to say nearly three weeks after the question had been remitted to Marshal Foch's Committee. Their preparation had occupied Marshal Foch's Committee nearly three weeks, instead of the 48 hours anticipated by Mr. Wilson, and, as the President had foreseen, the Council of Ten was destined to take some time in accepting them. On March 3rd there was only a preliminary consideration. Before March 6th the Terms had been revised. On March 7th the Supreme Council remitted them back to Marshal Foch's Committee for new Military Terms to be drawn up, based on the principle of voluntary service and long service. It was not until Monday, March 17th, more than a month after the question had been remitted to Marshal Foch's Committee, *and after the return from America of President Wilson* that the greater part of the Naval, Military and Air Terms were approved and even then some points remained over for settlement. Thus ends the second stage— namely the period of the President's absence in America.

'Reserving comments for the moment, we pass now to the third stage of these proceedings, which followed Mr. Wilson's return to Paris.

'No formal resolution to reverse the decision of February 12th had been taken. The Naval, Military and Air Terms had not yet been finally

[1] The italics are not in the original.

settled by the Supreme Council. The meeting to deal with them was postponed from Saturday, March 15th to Monday, March 17th, to give President Wilson time to study them.

'That the question was still quite open is shown by the following extract from the proceedings of the Supreme Council on March 17th:

'"President Wilson, continuing, said that the paragraph [1] as it now read indicated that these terms would be part of the Armistice, but *if they were to constitute the Preliminary Treaty of Peace*,[2] the wording was not correct. In this matter he found himself in considerable difficulty and he would be compelled to seek legal advice. *He had assumed that this preliminary Convention would only be temporary until the complete Treaty was prepared*,[2] and that it would have the character of a sort of exalted Armistice, the terms being reincluded in the formal Treaty. If this preliminary Convention had to be submitted to the Senate for a general discussion there, he knew from the usual slow process of legislatures that it would be several months before it would be ratified.

'"Mr. Balfour expressed the view that the statements made by President Wilson were most important and serious. As he understood the situation, *the policy accepted was that a Preliminary Treaty should be made*,[2] each clause of which should be a part of the Final Act, so that by the settlement of the Preliminary Peace a great part of the final Permanent Peace would actually have been conquered. It now appeared that the American Constitution made that full programme impracticable.

'"President Wilson said he did not feel quite sure of his ground, and he proposed that the question should be postponed until he could consult the constitutional lawyers, in whose opinion he had more confidence than in his own. For the present, it appeared to him that they would have to use the alternative phraseology prepared by M. Fromageot, namely:

'"After the expiration of a period of three months from the date of exchange of ratifications of the present stipulations, the German laws, etc."

'Although the greater part of the Naval, Military and Air Terms were settled at the Council of Ten on March 17th, a few knotty points as already mentioned remained over for settlement. As late as April 25th, the Council of Four (which had superseded the Council of Ten as the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference) was obliged to devote a whole meeting to the discussion of certain details of the Naval articles. It is interesting to note that the document which came before the Council on this date is headed, "Draft articles concerning the Kiel Canal for insertion in the *Preliminary Treaty of Peace with Germany*" and the same terminology is used in the Minutes, thus showing that the idea of a Preliminary Treaty was still alive.

'It has not been found possible to trace when the idea of a Preliminary Peace was dropped. No formal decision seems to have been taken on the subject. The Naval, Military and Air Terms had taken far longer to settle than had been expected, and, thanks to Mr. Balfour's "speed-

[1] Article 48 of the draft Naval, Military and Air Clauses.

[2] Italics are not in the original.

ing-up" resolutions of February 22nd, the remainder of the work of the Conference was by the fourth week in April very little behind the Naval, Military and Air Terms. In these circumstances (and apart from the constitutional difficulties in passing a Preliminary Peace through the Senate, which Mr. Wilson had discovered on his return from America) the main reason for the decision of February 12th had disappeared by the end of April and the Allied and Associated Powers were in a position on May 7th to present a complete draft of the Peace Treaty to the German Delegation.

'From the above narrative it will be seen that after President Wilson's departure to America misgivings in regard to the plan of a separate Naval, Military and Air Preliminary Peace Treaty were first expressed by M. Clemenceau, while still in bed suffering from a wound; that Mr. Balfour and M. Pichon at once reported his views to the Supreme Council; that M. Pichon quoted Marshal Foch in support of M. Clemenceau's opinion, and that Colonel House and Mr. Lansing strongly supported the same idea; that Mr. Balfour wished on February 22nd to pass the "speeding-up" resolutions without prejudice to the idea of a Preliminary Peace, and only dropped the words to this effect contained in the original draft of his resolution in deference to the unanimous views of his colleagues; that no formal resolution rescinding the decision in favour of a separate Preliminary Peace was taken either in President Wilson's absence or after his return; that the question was still quite open after President Wilson's return on March 15th, and remained open at least until April 25th; that after his return to Paris President Wilson could have pressed forward his original plan, had he been so minded; but that in all probability the unexpected difficulty in settling the Naval, Military and Air Terms, and the progress made with other parts of the Treaty made it not worth his while.

'The record of these events provides ample justification and logical reasons for the change of plan, against which President Wilson never seems to have raised any kind of protest or objection. Moreover the change of plan came about in the give and take of open discussion between men of different nations working together in complete loyalty to one another as well as to President Wilson during his absence. Everything is recorded in the official Minutes of which Mr. Wilson received copies. There is no trace of that "intrigue" which Mr. Baker declares "one can affirm with certainty" to have existed.'

In further consideration of Mr. Baker's charge that President Wilson's policy was impaired by the plan to hasten work on the economic and territorial aspects of the Treaty, it should be noted that House discussed this plan with Wilson on February 14 and that Wilson acquiesced. 'I asked him,' wrote House, 'if he [Wilson] had anything else to suggest in addition to these four articles. He thought they were sufficient.' (See above, p. 330). A fact that weakens Mr. Baker's thesis even more clearly is Wilson's statement in the Council on February 12 of his own interest in hastening work on the territorial and economic questions: 'He did not

wish his absence,' said Wilson, according to the *procès-verbal*, 'to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. *But he did not wish that, during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up.* He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away.' Mr. Baker knows of this important statement by the President to the Council, because he quotes the passage (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 290), but he omits from his quotation the sentence italicised. His omission of this sentence and his insertion in brackets of a passage not in the original *procès-verbal*, completely alter the sense of the original statement.

Furthermore, the President after his departure was fully informed by House's cables of the plans to hasten the economic and territorial terms to be embodied in a preliminary treaty when ready; there are clear references in House's cables of February 24, March 1, and March 4; President Wilson raised no objection, as might have been expected if he regarded these plans as likely to interfere with his policies.[1] After his return to Paris, at the first meeting of the Council on March 17 the President uttered not one word of protest, not any intimation that he disapproved of the Balfour resolutions.

A further charge of Mr. Baker should be reviewed. He regards the words '*inter alia*' suggested by Mr. Lansing as an addition to the resolution providing for the completion of the Treaty, as having a sinister intent and one likely to hamper Mr. Wilson's policy; he insinuates that they gave the Japanese an opportunity to initiate their Shantung claims.[2] Quite aside from this lapse in Mr. Baker's chronology, for the Japanese had advanced their claims some weeks previously, it is possible to find in Colonel House's diary a simpler explanation of Mr. Lansing's amendment without impugning the good faith of the Secretary of State. Colonel House states that he himself suggested these words so as to leave room for the introduction of the Covenant of the League into the preliminary treaty. Their purpose was to further Wilson's policy.

The papers of Colonel House, like the British Foreign Office Memorandum, furnish clear indication that, in making his charge of an intrigue, Mr. Baker has advanced assumptions and insinuations without a tittle of evidence.[3] The House papers show Wilson discussing with House the

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[1] In one cable, that of February 20, previous to the presentation of the Balfour resolutions, the President warns House against 'being hurried' into decisions. (See above, p. 336.) But the Balfour resolutions did not provide for decisions and the President made no objection to them.

[2] 'Here was where the Shantung settlement, so bitterly attacked in America, was begun — while Wilson was away.' Mr. Baker himself states, quoting documents, that on Januray 27, Wilson being present, the Japanese put forward their claim to German rights in Shantung. *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 301, II, 229.

[3] Mr. D. H. Miller writes of Mr. Baker's thesis: 'The effort to prove a plot where none existed could not well go further.' *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 98.

very plans which Mr. Baker asserts 'would wreck the entire American scheme for the Peace.' They show House cabling to Wilson the progress of those plans through the Balfour resolutions, and in his cables of February 27 and March 4 (cited above) explaining how he hoped to push the future of the League. They show that in order to maintain a semblance of probability in his charges against the British, Mr. Baker has been forced to omit essential passages from the official record.

CHAPTER XI

CRISIS AND COMPROMISE

Clemenceau . . . had had a meeting with Lloyd George and the President all afternoon. I asked how they had gotten on. . . . 'Splendidly, we disagreed about everything.'

Colonel House's Diary, March 20, 1919

I

VARIOUS historians, especially those writing from an American point of view, have presented the Peace Conference as though it were a clear-cut conflict between two sets of ideals, personified by Clemenceau on the one hand and Wilson on the other; a conflict between the evil of the old European diplomatic system and the virtue of the new world idealism. Such a picture is attractive to those who will not try to understand the complexities of historical truth. In reality the Peace Conference was not nearly so simple. It was not so much a duel as a general mêlée, in which the representatives of each nation struggled to secure endorsement for their particular methods of ensuring the peace. The object of all was the same — to avoid a repetition of the four years of world devastation; their methods naturally were different, since each was faced by a different set of problems.

Inevitably each nation put forward a solution which was colored by self-interest. This was, in a sense, just as true of the United States as of France, Italy, or Great Britain. We sacrificed very little in announcing that we would take no territory (which we did not want), nor reparations (which we could not collect). Our interest lay entirely in assuring a régime of world tranquillity; our geographic position was such that we could advocate disarmament and arbitration with complete safety. Wilson's idealism was in line with a healthy *Realpolitik*.

But American methods did not fit so perfectly the peculiar problems of European nations, dominated as they were by geographical and historical factors. According to the American programme, we ourselves gave up nothing of value, but we asked the European nations to give up much that seemed to them the very essence of security. We might insist that the most certain prevention of war lay in disarmament and reconciliation. The French would reply that the British and Americans, protected by the Channel and the Atlantic, could afford so to argue; France had been invaded too often not to insist upon better guarantees than written promises. We might insist that it was good business to write off German Reparations as a bad debt. The Europeans replied: 'Shall we who were attacked, then pay the entire cost and let the aggressor go scatheless? Not until we have exhausted every possible chance of making him pay.'

Even if Allied leaders themselves agreed to the wisdom of American proposals, they were prevented from accepting them by the force of public opinion. Clemenceau was branded as a traitor because he refused to break up Germany; if he had yielded on the occupation of the Rhinelands he would have been hurled from power and replaced by a more stubborn Premier. Lloyd George admitted that the public estimate of German capacity to pay was absurd, but he did not care to tell the electorate. Orlando would gladly have accepted a compromise solution of the Adriatic question; it was forbidden him by the political forces in Italy. The Prime Ministers were far from exercising supreme power. By arousing popular emotion during the war, an orthodox belligerent measure, they had created a Frankenstein monster which now held them helpless. They might compromise, if they possessed the skill, but they would not be permitted to yield.

It took time for the Americans to realize these essential facts. During the first month of the Conference, no firm

attempt was made to grapple with the vital issues. It was only during the process of intensive study in February and March that the force of European convictions became plain. Then suddenly, and before the President's return, in every technical commission and in the Supreme Council it was clear that no settlement at all could be reached unless every one made concessions. The Conference might sit until Doomsday, but no delegation would succeed in imposing what it regarded as the ideal solution.

During the first week of March Colonel House, whom Wilson had left in his place, faced these unavoidable facts. The moral he drew was that if the Conference appeared condemned to a settlement of compromise, and accordingly vicious, it could at least bestow upon Europe the benefit of a speedy decision. Better an unsatisfactory settlement in April than the same sort of settlement in June: sketch in the main lines of the Treaty at once, and leave it to the League to complete and if possible to correct. On March 6 an editorial, which was entirely in line with House's policy, appeared in the Paris *Daily Mail* to this effect:

'. . . The test of the forthcoming work of the chief Allied statesman will lie in the degree to which they can rapidly do practical justice to the Allied and Associated peoples and also to the enemy. As things stand, the greatest injustice towards Allied and enemy peoples alike, is delay in the conclusion of peace.

'Any statesman of sound sense and reasonable knowledge who has busied himself with the issues before the Peace Conference during the last two months, could sketch in twenty-four hours the main lines of a fair peace settlement. With the help of honest experts, he could fill in his sketch within a week. If the Allied statesmen cannot do jointly what most of them could do singly, they had better entrust one of their number with the task and leave him to do it.

'What would he do first? He would undoubtedly recognize that the foremost requirement is now to make peace with Germany. He would take the reports of Allied officers who have recently returned from Germany upon the conditions of that country and, in the light of them, would conclude that lack of food, lack of employment, lack of means of transport and lack of organization are likely to reduce the German people quickly to a state of chaotic anarchy unless remedies be applied. He would see that friendly peoples in Central Europe are in no better plight. He would recognize that, since effective remedies cannot be applied until the peace preliminaries are signed, the preliminaries must be presented at once to the enemy. To this end he would instruct the expert military, naval, economic, and political advisers of the Allied Governments to complete those preliminaries and would communicate them forthwith to the enemy representatives, insisting that they must be accepted within ten days of presentation.

'Upon their acceptance, he would send into Germany Allied military and civilian commissioners to see that the terms were carried out, on pain of complete suspension of the supplies which should be made available from the moment the preliminaries were signed.

'He would then settle in the light of the reports of the special commissions of the Conference such territorial questions between the Allies as are ripe for immediate treatment, having regard in each case to the principles of nationality and of government by the consent of the governed, and to the vital economic interests of the peoples concerned.

'Questions not ripe for immediate settlement he would refer to the Executive Council of the League of Nations, which should be appointed and begin to work pending the final revision of the Covenant.'

The problem was perhaps not quite so simple as the

writer of this leader made it to appear, but such a solution would have had the merit of ending the long delay. It would necessitate great concessions by the Americans, and House asked himself what might constitute reasonable compromise. In each case he based his final conclusion upon the advice of the American experts.

As regards Reparations, Colonel House's favorite solution was attractive economically, but quite impossible under existing political conditions. His original suggestion had been that a general indemnity syndicate should be created, composed of Allies, enemies, and neutrals, each contributing according to capacity. This syndicate should underwrite, to the extent that seemed economically and financially feasible, the cost of repairing the damage done by the war. This plan received little serious consideration, for it was entirely out of tune with the prevalent chorus of 'make Germany pay.' House's second solution was to write into the Treaty a lump sum for Reparations, within German capacity to pay, according to the judgment of financial experts and not inflated by political factors in Allied countries. If the French and British would not agree to the statement of a lump sum which the Americans regarded as reasonable, House was willing to postpone the decision by adopting the suggestion of John Foster Dulles, that the total amount of reparations be not stated in the Treaty, and that a commission be organized to determine at its leisure how much Germany owed under the terms of the pre-Armistice Agreement, how much she could pay, and by what methods. The solution was unquestionably bad, since it made Germany sign a blank check with every inducement to avoid work, for the more she worked the more she would have to pay. But it was better than writing an impossible sum into the Treaty. House worked hard but vainly with the British to persuade them to agree upon a definite but reasonable sum of reparations.

'Davis and I feel,' he wrote on March 16, 'and I so expressed myself to Balfour, that the wise thing to do would be to tell the British public that Germany is bankrupt and that the British financial experts and statesmen were mistaken in believing she could pay the enormous sums they and their public at one time had in mind. That if it were possible to get such an amount out of Germany, it would only be possible in the event the British would consent to lend the Germans an enormous sum in order to revive their commerce. If they did this, Germany would then become not only a competitor for British trade throughout the world, but would probably come near monopolizing it. It would be better therefore to accept Germany as a bankrupt and take what she could actually pay, or what was in sight, rather than create another British debt in order to place Germany in a condition to be a commercial rival. . . .

'*March* 17, 1919: Wiseman came again after lunch and said George was worried about the question of Reparation, both as to amount and as to how he was to satisfy the British public. The feature of my suggestion [to Wiseman] was that the sum of thirty billion dollars could be set as a maximum figure, and that a commission should meet once a year to determine how much Germany could pay the following year and also determine whether the amount of thirty billions was excessive for reparation demands. In this way the French and English could let Germany evade an impossible payment.'

But Mr. Lloyd George could not bring himself to naming any sum in the Treaty likely to disappoint Allied hopes, and he supported the French whose opposition to setting forth a lump sum was unyielding.[1] In these circumstances,

[1] 'At the time when this question of naming the sum was a burning one,' writes Mr. Lamont, 'Mr. Lloyd George summoned one or more of the financial delegates many times into conference with him and his own

House agreed with the American experts that it was necessary to fall back upon the *pis aller* of leaving the matter to a commission for later decision.

In regard to German boundaries, House followed the opinion of the experts of the American Inquiry to the effect that 'in the basin of the Saar a proposal to reëstablish the frontier of 1814, with possible enlargements so as to include secure possession of the adjacent coal fields, may be entertained, irrespective of strategic considerations, as a suitable compensation (with due allowance on the German war indemnity) for the destruction of the French coal mines of Lens and Valenciennes.' House was determined that if possible the French should be persuaded to give political control of this region to the League for a period of years, so as to permit the inhabitants later to express their desires. He accepted a solution for the Rhine problem which also made use of the League: 'A buffer state,' he wrote, 'should be created for a period of five years and then the League of Nations should decide whether the buffer state should exercise self-determination or should continue for another five-year period.'

Colonel House laid himself open to severe criticism by thus

experts, and at one time I thought he had become convinced of the utility of the American programme. Then he began to turn the other way to M. Clemenceau's solution. We begged him not to do so. We even went so far as to declare that if he would go back to England and address the House of Commons as he alone could, pointing out boldly that his pre-election estimates as to Germany's capacity to pay were wrong, he would gain overwhelming support and a tremendous added political prestige. But he declined to do this — and who am I to say that Mr. Lloyd George, probably the most skilful politician of modern times, was in this particular situation impolitic? All I feel is, if at this critical juncture both M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George had had a little more confidence in their own strength they would have joined with President Wilson and settled this question of German indemnity once for all, thus avoiding, to a considerable measure, the terrible consequences of continued unsettlement that have plagued Europe and the whole world since the Peace Conference adjourned and left the German indemnity open.' *What Really Happened at Paris*, 267.

accepting what seemed like compromise to many who had not studied the detailed difficulties of the territorial problems. In his notes of the period Mr. Baker, who returned to Paris with the President on March 14, wrote: 'The Colonel would make peace quickly by giving the greedy ones all they want!' A comparison of the demands of the French with the suggested compromises does not entirely bear out the remark. 'No man in the Peace Conference,' wrote Mr. Steed, 'was more opposed than Colonel House to the idea of "giving the greedy ones all they wanted"; but no man knew better that mere obstinacy in defending abstract ideas, without considering where compromise was practically expedient and harmless, could only end by bringing Wilson into collision with facts, and by discrediting him while spoiling the peace.' [1] It was certainly true that House was convinced that no essential advantage would be gained by the Americans through another month of discussion. If compromise was necessary, it were best to compromise quickly. 'My main drive now,' he wrote on March 14, 'is for peace with Germany at the earliest possible moment.'

Another argument for compromise lay in the fact that President Wilson's position was far weaker in March than it had been in January. His visit to the United States, instead of consolidating American opinion behind his policy at Paris, had merely revealed the strength of the Senatorial opposition. The Republicans in Congress, already antagonized by the election manifesto and by the personnel of the Peace Commission, began to make a constitutional issue of what they termed the President's disregard of Senatorial prerogative. He failed to placate the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and public opinion was manifestly divided on the League of Nations. It was clear that the President could not carry the Covenant through the Senate without clarification and amendment, in particular an amendment relating to the Monroe Doctrine.

[1] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 317.

Thus Wilson returned to Paris compelled to ask of the Peace Conference the favor of inserting in the Covenant clauses of peculiar interest to the United States. Was it likely that the Europeans would grant this favor, without exacting from him reciprocatory concessions of equal interest to France, Great Britain, and Italy?

II

The President landed at Brest in a mood quite hostile to any compromise. He was not himself inclined to yield to the Senate demand for amendments to the Covenant, and he was irritated by the unfriendly reaction to his declaration that the Covenant would be so intertwined with the Treaty that the two could not be separated.[1] He questioned House's belief that he would have to make broad concessions to France. Mr. Wilson was not fully impressed with the need for speed, and intimated that he thought the German Treaty should not be given precedence. Evidently he desired a complete world settlement.

'*March* 14, 1919: I went up on Wednesday evening,' wrote House, 'after our dinner and reception, on the President's special train to meet him at Brest. It was a hard trip and the weather was as bad as weather can be, even at Brest. . . .

'I had ample opportunity this morning to go over the entire situation with the President and to get from him his story of his visit to the United States. He said, "Your dinner to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was a failure as far as getting together was concerned." He spoke with considerable bitterness of the manner in which he was treated by some of the Senators. Knox and Lodge remained perfectly silent, refusing to ask any questions or to act in the

[1] In the Metropolitan Opera House, March 4. The statement sounded in his opponents' ears unpleasantly like a threat.

spirit in which the dinner was given. However, I said to the President that the dinner was a success from my viewpoint, which was that it checked criticism as to his supposed dictatorship and refusal to consult the Senate about foreign affairs. He admitted this. I said that it also had a good effect upon the people, even if it had failed to mollify the Senators themselves.

'The President comes back very militant and determined to put the League of Nations into the Peace Treaty.[1]

'*March* 17, 1919: In talking with the President this morning, he insisted that peace should be made simultaneously with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. His thought was that Germany should be tied up with the settlements made with these countries. Since both Austria-Hungary and Turkey are being dismembered, this would delay peace for an interminable time and I thought another way out could be found. A clause could be put in the treaty with Germany binding her to accept the treaties which were subsequently to be made with the other states.

'I have asked David Miller and T. W. Gregory to give me their opinions as to the legality of this suggestion.'

One method of hastening the work President Wilson adopted enthusiastically. He agreed to give over the meetings of the Council of Ten, which had led to delay, and to continue the informal conversations at which Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and House were able to debate rapidly and effectively the critical issues, as they arose. Two days before the President's arrival House suggested this to Clemenceau: 'I made an appointment for the President, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George to meet here in my rooms on Friday, and to cut out the Quai d'Orsay meeting, which he readily promised

[1] A reference probably to the Senate resolution for separating League from Treaty, rather than to European opposition to putting the Covenant in the preliminary treaty.

to do.' On the afternoon of Wilson's arrival, March 14, was held what may be regarded as the first meeting of the 'Council of Four,' although on this occasion Orlando was absent. It took place in House's room in the Crillon.

'They remained together from three to five o'clock discussing the Western boundary question and the amount of reparation Germany should be forced to pay. During the latter part of the afternoon they had Montagu, Davis, and Loucheur on hand. I also had Tardieu and Mezes in the event they needed them.'

Thereafter, all the more important decisions of the Prime Ministers were taken at these informal meetings, although it was not until March 24 that they became sufficiently regular to assume the title of the 'Council of Four.' The method made for speed and efficiency. On the other hand, the meetings were conducted with such secrecy that, so far as the American delegation was concerned, it was impossible for even those whose work demanded exact knowledge to keep track of the progress of negotiations. No American secretary was present, and the *procès-verbal*, drafted by Sir Maurice Hankey, was not sent even to the American Peace Commissioners. Mr. Baker, who had been chosen by the American Commission to interpret the work of the Conference for the press correspondents, wrote to House even before the Council of Four began its regular secret sessions, insisting that, while he could not expect to get news direct from the President, he ought at least to be allowed access to the *procès-verbal*; as it was, he was compelled to gather information from his British friends.[1]

As Mr. Wilson became involved in the discussions, he also realized the need of speed and the necessity of some sort of compromise. But neither the French nor the British were

[1] R. S. Baker to House, March 19, 1919.

quick to respond. It was with the greatest difficulty that Lloyd George was persuaded not to go back to London, on March 18, and then only as the result of a joint letter written by the President and signed by the other Prime Ministers.

'*March* 17, 1919: Wiseman came to tell me that . . . he had seen Lloyd George and explained the necessity of his remaining in Paris all of this week and next. I asked him to say to George that there were no political matters in England that could not be better attended to in Paris. It was here that the eyes of the world were focussed and if we did our work well or badly, quickly or slowly, we should be judged by results. George replied that if we would get the President to write him a letter requesting him to remain and would get Clemenceau and Orlando also to sign it, he thought he could put off going to London for two weeks.

'When I told the President this I handed him a pad and asked if he would not write the letter. . . . I had it typed while he was talking to the Economic Council. I then sent Frazier to the Ministry of War to get Clemenceau's signature and to the Hôtel Eduard VII for Orlando's. The letter was sent back by 2.30 and immediately sent to the Quai d'Orsay to be handed Lloyd George before the meeting. It was quick work. . . . His going would have meant delaying of peace for just so long as he remained away.'

Joint Letter to Mr. Lloyd George

PARIS, *March* 17, 1919

DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

It seems to us imperative, in order that the world may wait no longer for peace than is actually unavoidable, that you should remain in Paris until the chief questions connected with the peace are settled, and we earnestly beg that you will do so. If you can arrange to remain for another two

weeks we hope and believe that this all-important result can be attained.

We write this with a full comprehension of the very urgent matters that are calling you to England, and with a vivid consciousness of the sacrifice we are asking you to make.

Sincerely yours

WOODROW WILSON
G. CLEMENCEAU
V. E. ORLANDO

Lloyd George remained, but negotiations proceeded slowly. The differences between the British and French were in some cases quite as marked as between the French and Americans; even if President Wilson agreed to concessions he did not thereby ensure the unanimity necessary to completing the Treaty draft. The British objected yet more strongly than the Americans to the French demand for occupation of the Rhinelands, and they were not inclined to approve any concessions to France on her eastern border until the Anglo-French differences regarding Syria were arranged.

'Perhaps the most interesting feature of the day,' wrote House on March 20, 'was going with André Tardieu to call on Clemenceau at his request. He had had a meeting with Lloyd George and the President all afternoon. I asked how they had gotten on. . . . 'Splendidly, we disagreed about everything.'

'*March* 22, 1919: The President looked worn and tired. . . . I am discouraged at the outlook. We are not moving as rapidly now. From the look of things the crisis will soon be here. Rumblings of discontent every day. The people want peace. Bolshevism is gaining ground everywhere. Hungary has just succumbed. We are sitting upon an open powder magazine and some day a spark may ignite it. . . .

'If the world were not in such a fluid state I should not object to matters going as deliberately as they have been going, but under present conditions we are gambling each day with the situation.

'*March* 24, 1919: The evidence is overwhelming that the public everywhere is getting weary of what is being done in Paris. It is not that we are taking too much time for normal conditions, but since the world is crumbling about us it is necessary to act with a celerity commensurate with the dangers that confront us.

'I saw the President for nearly an hour at his residence, and pointed out the necessity of forcing the Conference out of the rut into which it has fallen. He asked what I had to suggest. I said it was necessary to tell George, Clemenceau, and Orlando that immediate peace was not only imperative, but if we did not make it in a reasonable time we should find ourselves with a Peace Treaty and no one excepting ourselves to sign it. . . . I urged him to settle once and for all the question as to whether the League of Nations was to go into the peace Treaty.[1] Tell them that the Covenant for the League of Nations would either be written into the Treaty of Peace or we would have none of it; that the only excuse we could give for meddling in European or world affairs was a league of nations through which we hope to prevent wars. If that was not to be, then we would not care to mix again in their difficulties.

'The other three questions to be put to the Prime Ministers were: 1. The amount of reparation; 2. What was necessary to satisfy France and safeguard her future; 3. What should be the boundary lines between the old Austria-Hungary and Italy.

'I advised doing away with the Quai d'Orsay meetings and

[1] The complaint was again being voiced that the necessity of amending the Covenant was leading to delay, and a fresh demand was being made that the League be separated from the Treaty.

EMIR FAISAL

for him [Wilson] to meet with the Prime Ministers in continuous session until these three essentials to peace had been determined. He said he would do it. . . . The Quai d'Orsay meetings are at an end for the present, and the Prime Ministers and himself meet to-morrow at eleven to get at grips with the questions outlined.

'*March* 27, 1919: Suggested to the President that he make a statement regarding the Covenant and to say something which would refute the general belief which X and others have fostered, that peace was being delayed because the President wished to have the League of Nations included in the Peace Treaty.

'*April* 2, 1919: Last night and to-day I finished reading pages 83 to 167 of the diary. . . . It is sealed and placed in a safe deposit box. On reading over so many pages it reminds me of how very inconsistent a large part of the diary will appear and also what a false prophet I shall have made of myself in many instances. At the beginning of this last reading I predicted an early peace, even thought we might be ready as early as March 20 to ask the Germans to Versailles. It is now April 2 and we are no further along than we were the day this prediction was made, almost a month ago. . . .

'*April* 4, 1919: A long conference with Lord Robert Cecil about the situation as it exists to-day. We both see the world crumbling about our feet, and see the need not only for peace, but the lifting of all trade restrictions and the bringing the world back to the normal. Even after peace is made our trouble will not end, for it will be many weary months before it will be possible to start industries and get the currents of commerce properly flowing.'

III

The chief stumbling-blocks in the path of agreement were as always the problems of Germany's western frontier, Reparations, and the military security of France. On March 26,

Lloyd George assumed the leadership in the movement of protest against French claims by presenting a note entitled 'Some Considerations for the Peace Conference, before they finally draft their terms.' It was a skillful exposition of Wilson's own position, a protest against the peril involved in a peace of victory. 'Injustice, arrogance displayed in the hour of triumph will never be forgotten nor forgiven.' He proceeded to argue against the transfer of Germans to alien sovereignty, to underline the probability of driving Germany into the arms of Bolshevism, to ask for the admission of Germany to the League.

But Lloyd George was himself standing upon shaky ground. The French replied that his suggestions applied merely to Germany's Continental position. The concessions he suggested would not reconcile Germany. The Germans cared just as much about their colonies, their navy, their mercantile marine. Would the British agree to yield their own demands on these points which seemed vital to British security? If England's imperial position must be protected, the same was true of Continental France and of the new nations of Central Europe who would prove the last bulwark against the Bolshevism Lloyd George feared.

A solid working understanding between Lloyd George and Wilson in opposition to French claims was impossible, partly because of their differences in regard to reparations. They were hampered also by the atmosphere of Paris, where German war guilt was assumed as a proved fact; every one was afraid of being called pro-German. 'The position of the English and the Americans toward France,' writes Nitti, 'was such that every objection of theirs was bound to appear as an act of ill will, a pleading of the enemy's cause.' [1]

In such circumstances Wilson and Lloyd George were led inevitably to compromise, although each yielded slowly and not without securing important concessions from France.

[1] Nitti, *The Wreck of Europe*, 114–15.

Colonel House's friendship for Clemenceau made him naturally an intermediary together with André Tardieu, who was Clemenceau's chief agent.[1] Later, House wrote of Tardieu: 'No man worked with more tireless energy and none had a better grasp of the delicate and complex problems brought before the Congress. He was not only invaluable to France, but to his associates from other countries as well. He was in all truth the one nearly indispensable man at the Conference.'

On March 17, three days after the return of the President, Clemenceau sent to House his statement of the French position on the problem of the Rhine and French security.

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, *March* 17, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I am sending you personally and confidentially a copy of the note which I have addressed this morning to MM. Wilson and Lloyd George.

Very affectionately yours

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

The above-mentioned note maintained the necessity of separating the left bank of the Rhine, in a political and economic sense, from the Reich, and establishing the military occupation of the Rhine by an interallied force. The French, however, would yield their demand for permanent occupation and agree to a date being set for evacuation (presumably after thirty years), provided that the left bank be completely demilitarized as well as a zone fifty kilometers east of the river; provided, also, that the Allies through a permanent commission of inspection retain the right to supervise the

[1] See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty, passim;* H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 309–11, 313–15, 317; C. T. Thompson, *The Peace Conference Day by Day*, 282 ff.

execution of conditions by Germany, and give to France the right to occupy the Rhine in case of non-fulfillment; provided, also, that France be granted her claims in the Saar and provided, finally, that Great Britain and the United States agree to consider as an act of aggression any entry of the German army into the demilitarized zone and in such case to bring military aid.

The suggestion of an Anglo-American guarantee to France had been made by Lloyd George to House during Wilson's absence.[1] It was repeated at the first meeting of the Premiers with the President on March 14. House proceeded to define it, and on March 20 took it to the French Prime Minister.

'*March* 20, 1919: . . . Clemenceau read it with keen delight and substituted but one word, which was "attack" instead of "invasion." . . . I have my doubts as to the Senate accepting such a treaty, but that is to be seen. Meanwhile it satisfied Clemenceau and we can get on with the real business of the Conference. It is practically promising only what we promise to do in the League of Nations, but since Clemenceau does not believe in the League of Nations it may be necessary to give him a treaty on the outside.'

Colonel House's draft, after its approval by Clemenceau, was submitted to Lloyd George and Balfour, who also accepted it in principle. By March 27 it was recognized as an essential part of the compromise. It read as follows:

'Because of the havoc which Germany has brought upon the world by her attacks upon Belgium and France in 1914, and in order to prevent as far as possible such another disaster to humanity, we hereby solemnly pledge to one another our immediate military, financial, economic and moral sup-

[1] See *supra*, p. 360.

port of and to one another in the event Germany should at any time make a like unprovoked and unwarranted attack against either one or more of the subscribing Powers.' [1]

'*March* 27, 1919: In thinking about this matter to-day,' wrote House, 'I thought I ought to call the President's attention to the perils of such a treaty. Among other things, it would be looked upon as a direct blow at the League of Nations. The League is supposed to do just what this treaty proposed, and if it were necessary for the nations to make such treaties, then why the League of Nations? I did not shake him, for . . . he committed himself to Clemenceau and he does not wish to withdraw his promise, a position which I thoroughly commend.'

Agreement, however, was still far distant. Lloyd George and the President both were firm in their opposition to a thirty-year occupation of the Rhinelands, and the President refused to approve French annexation of the Saar. On March 28 the crisis of disagreement seemed acute:

'Lloyd George asked me to have lunch with him,' wrote House on that day, 'for the purpose of discussing the Russian question. However, when I got there he had just returned from the President's house and showed signs of considerable excitement. It seems that the long-expected row between either Clemenceau and the President, or Lloyd George and Clemenceau, had actually come.'

[1] President Wilson changed the language of House's draft, omitting reference to 'the havoc which Germany has brought upon the world' and summarizing the gist of the proposal in a brief note which he gave to the French Government on March 28, as follows: 'In a separate treaty by the United States, a pledge by the United States, subject to the approval of the Executive Council of the League of Nations, to come immediately to the assistance of France as soon as any unprovoked movement of aggression against her is made by Germany.' The official French attitude is admirably expressed by Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 202 ff.

Upon this occasion it was the Saar that caused the flare-up, Mr. Wilson asserting that no one had ever heard of the Saar until after the Armistice, and Clemenceau rejoining with an intimation that the President laid himself open to the charge of pro-Germanism [1] and a hint that no French Prime Minister could sign a treaty which did not satisfy France's claim to the Saar.

'Then if France does not get what she wishes,' said the President, 'she will refuse to act with us. In that event do you wish me to return home?'

'I do not wish you to go home,' said Clemenceau, 'but I intend to do so myself,' and left the house.

The following day the French Prime Minister sent Tardieu to Colonel House, who asked Mr. Charles H. Haskins to work out with Tardieu a solution of the Saar problem that would assure the French unhampered control of the coal mines as fair reparation for the damage done to the French mines, but would not transfer a large German population to French sovereignty. The President was slow to agree to the suggestion upon which Haskins, Tardieu, and Headlam-Morley, representing the British, finally settled: that a special administrative and political régime must be applied to the district, so as not to interfere with French operation of the mines.

[1] Cf. the following statement by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, of the American Delegation, in *What Really Happened at Paris*, 464:

'Three of us were asked to call at the President's house, and on the following morning at eleven o'clock we arrived. . . . He remarked: "Gentlemen, I am in trouble and I have sent for you to help me out. The matter is this: the French want the whole left bank of the Rhine. I told M. Clemenceau that I could not consent to such a solution of the problem. He became very much excited and then demanded ownership of the Saar Basin. I told him I could not agree to that either because it would mean giving 300,000 Germans to France. . . . I do not know whether I shall see M. Clemenceau again. I do not know whether he will return to the meeting this afternoon. In fact, I do not know whether the Peace Conference will continue. M. Clemenceau called me a pro-German and abruptly left the room."'

'*March* 28, 1919: I asked the President,' wrote House, 'to bring his position on the French [Saar] boundary proposals into harmony with the British. The British and ourselves are practically in agreement, therefore it would be a tactical mistake to have the United States take a stand in which she was not supported by Great Britain. I advised yielding a little in order to secure harmony, so that the accusation could not be made that we were unreasonable. He promised to do this.

'*April* 2, 1919: The President tried to get me to admit that the solution which our experts have proposed and which Clemenceau might be willing to take as to the Saar Valley was inconsistent with the Fourteen Points. I replied that there were many who thought otherwise.'

IV

At the same moment that the problem of the Saar thus seemed to have reached a deadlock, the question of Reparations was again referred to the Council of Four by the experts. Concessions had been made on both sides; the French and British agreed that indirect war costs should be excluded from the Reparations bill; President Wilson agreed to the arguments of General Smuts and approved the inclusion of pensions, which the American experts had opposed. There remained the question of naming a definite lump sum in the Treaty. This the French consistently opposed, with the support of Mr. Lloyd George. The French Minister for Finance, M. Klotz, thus summarized the French position:

'The Germans are obliged and have pledged themselves to repair the damages. We do not know to-day what such reparation will cost. Improvised estimates would be imprudent. The only system is the following: The Reparations Commission will fix the amount — when it has all the facts. Then according to the amount of the debt thus ascertained,

it will settle the figure of the annuities and the length of payment.' [1]

Unwillingly, President Wilson yielded again and advised the American experts Mr. Davis, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Baruch, and Mr. McCormick not to insist upon the statement of a definite sum in the Treaty. At this moment the President, worn out physically and nervously, suffered a severe attack of influenza. On the evening of April 3 he was forced to his bedroom, where he was confined during the following four and a half days, not meeting the Prime Ministers again until the afternoon of April 8. He insisted that negotiations should not be delayed, and asked Colonel House to take his place in the Council of Four.

The problem of Reparations came up on the morning of April 5 and the meeting proved to be, as Sir Maurice Hankey prophesied in a note to House, 'a turning-point in the thorny question.' The conference began inauspiciously, for it soon developed that, whereas the American experts believed they had already reached an agreement on principle, the British and French expected more concessions. The Americans understood that, while no definite sum would be named in the Treaty, the sum which the Reparations Commission would be empowered to name after the lapse of two years would not be based upon the total amount of the damage, but rather upon German capacity to pay within a period of thirty years.[2]

The French refused, however, to permit the Reparations

[1] Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 296.

[2] As Mr. Davis argued at the afternoon meeting, the experts had acted on the principle that Germany could not pay all she owed: 'The basis of their calculations,' he said, 'was, therefore, always the amount that Germany could pay, and the limiting period had generally been taken as from thirty to thirty-five years. After that period the amount became so large that the annual installments were swallowed up in interest.'

Commission to take into account German capacity to pay, when evaluating damages, and insisted that the sum to be paid could by no means be limited to the amount recoverable in thirty years. To the disappointment of the Americans, who had thought themselves in agreement with the British, Mr. Lloyd George also opposed the principle of a thirty-year limitation, although 'if she [Germany] can pay in that time it is better than in forty years.' Long discussion followed, Mr. Davis, supported by Colonel House, insisting that 'you had either to fix for the Commission a limitation of years or a maximum of money to be paid.'

Thus at the moment when in House's words 'agreement appeared imminent,' deadlock once more threatened.

As the afternoon session opened, matters appeared worse rather than better because of the unwillingness of the British to grant the special priority to the Belgians, which the Americans from the first had insisted was due them on account of the illegal invasion, and for which House had been working for more than a month. 'Our experts,' he wrote, 'have been instructed not to argue the question of Belgium, but to put our position to their associates and, if they decline to come to it, to make a minority report which we will give to the Belgians and which we will take occasion to have published.' In the end Belgian priority was secured.

But it was obviously fruitless to continue the fight for giving the Reparations Commission power to name a sum which Germany could pay in thirty years. Clemenceau was definite and final on this point.

'I do not accept,' he said, 'that the Commission should have power to declare the capacity of payment of Germany. I would say this: Germany owes me X for damages to persons and property. The Governments will have the right to reduce that sum in the course of years if they deem it just. But we are not prepared to accept any reduction now. We

shall see what is possible and what is not, we shall take into account the question of accumulated interest (we may have to abandon our claim to interest altogether). We are willing to let the door [remain] open to every liberal solution.

'But I ask, in the name of the French Government, after consultation with my colleagues, that what the enemy owes to us should be declared (if not by means of —— sum, at least by determining categories of damages to be compensated for). We shall retain our faculty of allowing time to pay. Let us fix a limit of thirty years, as thought desirable by most of us. If everything has not been paid for during thirty years, then the Commission will have the right to extend the period.'

Recognizing that the French were determined that German capacity to pay should not be allowed to affect the bill rendered, regardless of what was later collected, House determined to crystallize Clemenceau's proposition in a draft article:

'I had his remarks carefully written, then typed, and it is on that basis that our experts will go into the Conference tomorrow and report to us on Monday.'

This draft stated merely that 'the amount of damages, *as set forth in the specific categories annexed hereto* for which compensation is to be made, shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission. . . . The findings of this Commission as to the amount of damages shall be concluded and communicated to the Enemy States on or before May 1st, 1921. The schedule of payments to be made by the Enemy States shall be set forth *by this Commission*, taking into account, *in the fixation of the time for payment*, their capacity for payment.'

The result represented a yielding all along the line from

the American view. Colonel House, who kept in continual touch with Wilson, regarded the draft of April 5 as the last concession and seemed inclined to break off negotiations if anything more were asked by the French.

'I went in and out of the President's room at various intervals,' he wrote, 'so as to keep him informed as to the progress we were making.[1] . . . I suggested that in the event there was no agreement by the end of next week [April 12], he draw up a statement of what the United States is willing to sign in the way of a peace treaty, and give the Allies notice that unless they can come near our way of thinking we would go home immediately and let them make whatever peace seems to them best. My suggestion was to do this gently and in the mildest possible tone, but firmly.'

Wilson himself was evidently losing patience, fearing that with each concession on the part of the United States new demands would arise. On Sunday, April 6, he was sufficiently recovered to receive the American Commissioners in his room.

'Went to Versailles to lunch,' wrote House, 'but had hardly gotten there before the President telephoned he would like to see me at four o'clock. He had our fellow Commissioners there and we discussed at great length the best possible means of speeding up the Peace Conference. It was determined that if nothing happened within the next few days, the President would say to the Prime Ministers that unless peace was made according to their promises, which were to conform to the principles of the Fourteen Points, he would either have to go home or he would insist upon having the conferences in the open; in other words, to have

[1] These meetings of the Council of Four were held in the President's house.

Plenary Sessions with the delegates of all the smaller Powers sitting in.'

Colonel House urged, however, that the Reparations draft of April 5 should be accepted, if no more changes were asked. The moment of demanding American amendments to the Covenant of the League was at hand, and if the Americans went home the entire basis of a settlement would be destroyed. Two days before, House had opened the heart of his attitude to Lamont and Davis: 'I told them that in my opinion it was more important to bring about peace quickly than it was to haggle over details; that I would rather see an immediate peace and the world brought to order than I would to see a better peace and delay.' Hence on Sunday he wrote: 'I took up with the President the question of Reparations which the experts have been working on to-day, and got him in agreement with the plan, with slight modifications which they had worked out.'

More delays followed, and the afternoon meeting of April 7 did not complete the draft; although no principles were affected, long consideration of verbal niceties filled the session. House himself lost patience and left the meeting, entrusting the American case to the experts.

'It was the most footless,' he wrote, 'of many footless meetings. We had agreed absolutely upon the terms of reparations. Loucheur, after a draft of the terms had been prepared, told Davis that Clemenceau had read and approved it *in toto*. This was in response to my endeavor to have the draft approved without the crossing of a *t* or the dotting of an *i*. . . . Loucheur told me time and again after we had accepted and voted over a few verbal and unimportant changes, that it was the last, and yet, when the very next sentence was read, suggestions for changes would be made. . . . At six o'clock I left.

'I crossed the street [1] to tell the President about the meeting and he thoroughly approved what I had done. We wasted the entire afternoon, accomplishing nothing, for the text when finished was practically what it was when we went into the meeting. Any drafting committee could have done it better. This is what makes one so impatient at the whole procedure of the Conference. Instead of drawing the picture with big lines, they are drawing it like an etching. If the world was not aflame, this would be permissible, but it is almost suicidal in times like these to try to write a treaty of peace, embracing so many varied and intricate subjects, with such methods. . . .

'The President was thoroughly discouraged when we talked the matter over and wondered what the outcome was to be.'

The extent of Wilson's discouragement may be indicated by the fact that early in the morning of April 7 a cable was sent at his order to determine how soon the *George Washington* could be sent to France:

Admiral Benson to Navy Department

[Cablegram]

April 7, 1919

What is earliest possible date U.S.S. *George Washington* can sail for Brest, France, and what is probable earliest date of arrival Brest? President desires movements this vessel expedited. Carefully conceal fact that any communication on this subject has been received. No distribution for this dispatch except officers actually concerned.

BENSON

The sending of this telegram has been frequently repre-

[1] The meeting was being held in Lloyd George's apartment in the rue Nitot, opposite the President's house.

sented as an effective threat, which immediately reduced the French and British to an attitude of abject submission to American demands, and thus proved to be a turning-point in the Conference.[1] Nothing of the sort is apparent in the records. No further change of importance was made in the Reparations draft, and it was Mr. Wilson and not the French or British who made concessions during the following four days, in the discussions on the Saar and Rhinelands. Wilson himself evidently regarded the cable as an incident of small importance, for although he was in constant personal touch with House and discussed the attitude which the Colonel should take as the President's representative in the Council of Four the next day, House says nothing of the cable in his diary. With these facts in mind, we may assume that the President sent the cable merely as a precautionary measure, so as to be able later to utilize the *George Washington's* presence in Brest as a threat; this is the more likely in that the cable was sent almost immediately after the meeting with the Commissioners Sunday afternoon, where it was decided 'that if nothing happened within the next few days,' Wilson would tell the Prime Ministers that he 'would have to go home' or have the conferences in the open.

As it turned out, the Reparations compromise drafted on

[1] Thus Mr. Baker says (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 61): 'The President's bold gesture had cleared the air, and there was apparent a new effort to get together.' And Mr. Creel (*The War, the World, and Wilson*, 211) says: 'On April 7th the President struggled to his feet and faced the Council in what every one recognized as a final test of strength. . . . An agreement must be reached once for all. If a peace of justice, he would remain; if a peace of greed, then he would leave. . . . The *George Washington* was in Brooklyn. By wireless the President ordered it to come to Brest at once. The gesture was conclusive as far as England and France were concerned. Lloyd George swung over instantly to the President's side.

It should be noted that the President did not meet the Council at all on April 7, and that the cable for the *George Washington*, so far from swinging Lloyd George 'over instantly to the President's side,' apparently left him unaffected, for in the discussions of April 8 he opposed Wilson and supported the French in the vital matter of the Saar.

April 5, to which Wilson gave his tentative approval on April 6, formed finally the basis of the Reparations clauses; the Reparations Commission was not to have the power to declare Germany's capacity, but merely to determine the amount of damages as set forth in the specific categories. To this Wilson agreed, and one chief element of discord and delay was eliminated.

'*April* 8, 1919: The President,' wrote House, 'met with the three Prime Ministers in the afternoon and, much to my delight, they came to a tentative settlement of the question of Reparations. The President yielded more than I thought he would, but not more, I think, than the occasion required. We had a long talk over the telephone about it to-night.'

Compromise followed on the other points. On the morning of April 8, Lloyd George suggested to the Four that the Saar Valley should not be annexed to France, but should be formed into a neutral state, 'a kind of Luxemburg. . . . He would make this district bigger than the Saar Valley, enlarging it so as to bring in the industrial section upon which the Saar Valley depended. . . . He would make it an independent state in the customs union of France with its own parliament.'

Colonel House was not greatly taken with this plan, although he agreed that if the suggested state were placed under the protection of the League and not economically united to France it should be considered. In the afternoon, Wilson returned to the Council and refused absolutely any alienation of the Saar from Germany. He would concede the mines to France, and meet the difficulties certain to arise from German ownership of the soil and French ownership of the sub-soil, by the institution of a mixed commission of arbitration.

From this suggestion of a commission sprang the final

solution, upon which Tardieu and Haskins worked busily and to which they finally won the President. On the afternoon of April 9, Wilson suggested to the Council that no mandate of administration should be granted to France, but that German sovereignty should be suspended for fifteen years, during which period an administrative commission under the League should have full rights in the Saar. A plebiscite should be taken at the end of fifteen years to determine the ultimate sovereignty of the Saar. Clemenceau agreed and the project was adopted by the Council on the morning of April 10.

There remained the question of the Rhine, toward the settlement of which progress had been made through informal discussion during the week of the President's illness. He and Lloyd George had earlier agreed that the left bank and the zone of fifty kilometers on the right bank should be demilitarized and that the United States and Great Britain would promise to protect France from any aggression by Germany; they would not, however, consider a political separation of the left bank from Germany even for a limited period and they were slow to approve the occupation of the line of the Rhine by an interallied army. Clemenceau yielded slowly. He had to face the militant disapproval of Foch and a strong political group, including Poincaré himself, which agreed that it would be dangerous to set a date for the evacuation of the occupied territory previous to Germany's fulfillment of all the conditions of the Treaty, including Reparations.[1] By April 14, Clemenceau indicated to House the basis of possible agreement.

'He said,' wrote Colonel House, 'he would agree to the President's terms for the protection of France and the west

[1] See the detailed letters of M. Poincaré in *Le Temps*, September 12, 1921, and after. The French, who had earlier based their demand for occupation upon the plea of security, now asked for it as a gage ensuring payment of Reparations.

bank of the Rhine. It was not what he wanted, but with the guarantee of the United States he thought it sufficient. He would have to fight Foch and his other Marshals, but he was willing to make the fight provided the President would agree to let the French occupy three strata of German territory. The first stratum to include Coblentz, the second, Mainz, and the third would come closer to the French frontier. He said in the Treaty of '71 Germany insisted upon occupying France for five years or until the indemnity was paid. The indemnity was paid sooner, therefore the troops were withdrawn sooner; nevertheless, it set a precedent for his demand.'

House took up the suggested compromise on the following day with President Wilson, who decided that Clemenceau's proposals could be accepted.

'The President made a wry face over some of it,' wrote House, 'particularly the three five-year periods of occupation, but he agreed to it all. . . .

'I went to the Ministry of War to see Clemenceau immediately after the President left. I said to him, "I am the bearer of good news. The President has consented to all that you asked of me yesterday." He grasped both my hands and then embraced me. . . .

'Baker and others of our *entourage* have been after me for several days concerning attacks in the French Press, not only against the President but against the United States. I told Clemenceau about this and said that I cared nothing about it individually, but I did care about the good relations between the United States and France and I hoped he would stop it. He summoned his secretary and told him in French, with much emphasis, that all attacks of every description on President Wilson and the United States must cease; that our relations were of the very best and that there was no

disagreement between our two countries upon the questions before the Peace Conference.'

The effect was magical. All the Parisian papers appeared on the morning of the 16th with the most enthusiastic praise of President Wilson.

The agreement on the Rhine occupation was not formally approved by Lloyd George before April 22, but from the 15th on, it was clear that the crisis had passed and that the Treaty would be ready for the German delegates who had been summoned to appear at Versailles.

Thus on three major problems Wilson made such far-reaching concessions that many, if not most, liberals accused him of surrendering the Fourteen Points. By consenting to alienate the Saar from Germany for at least fifteen years, by approving the occupation of the Rhine and an interallied commission of military control, and by failing to write a definite sum of reparations based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, the Allied and Associated Powers had certainly given the Germans the opportunity to argue that the Treaty was founded upon the desire to destroy the economic and political strength of Germany, rather than upon the declared war aims of President Wilson.

In one respect the Americans made a concession which was probably unnecessary and which returned to haunt Europe. The American experts originally planned to connect the Reparations clauses directly with the pre-Armistice Agreement, and this purpose was partially fulfilled by the language of Article 232: 'The Allied and Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers. . . .' This was merely repeating the pre-Armistice Agreement, the same undertaking that Germany had agreed to in November at the time she asked for an armistice. By this clause the

Allies would have been entitled to all that Germany could pay. If there had been nothing else, Germany could not later have contended that there was any connection between reparations and war guilt.

Unfortunately the French insisted upon a clear declaration of German responsibility for all the costs of the war which, they averred, Germany had imposed upon them. Hence Article 231: 'The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.' This seemed to the Germans like a confession, the truth of which they could not admit, extracted from them by force. It also led them to connect reparations with war guilt — a quite unnecessary connection, since in the pre-Armistice Agreement, while still a free agent, Germany promised reparation. The Germans were thus given a basis for the argument that if they could prove their innocence of war guilt they ought to be freed from the responsibility for reparation. This article, more than any other in the Treaty, stimulated sentimental discontent in Germany and the demand for its revision.

But however unfortunate the decisions made by the Council of Four during the month of crisis, it is difficult to see how otherwise agreement could have been reached and the régime of disastrous uncertainty ended.

V

It is impossible to understand the concessions which President Wilson made to the French and the British without keeping in mind his determination that the Covenant of the League should be in the Treaty, and also the necessity, imposed upon him by American opinion, of asking for amendments to the draft Covenant. The generalization that he

traded the League against French and British demands is rather too bald to express the real atmosphere. But it is true that he believed the League to be of supreme importance, the one factor that would mitigate the necessary evils of the territorial and economic settlements. This the Europeans realized and it strengthened their position.

It is also true that Wilson finally secured at Paris the sort of League he hoped for, in the face of strong opposition. The price he paid for it was heavy, and therein lies the tragedy of his later failure to carry the Covenant through the United States Senate. There might have been great moral value in a firm insistence upon the Fourteen Points, even though it had led to a break with our Associates in the war and had ruined the League. But to compromise with the Europeans on the Treaty and then fail to secure the Senate's endorsement of the League, meant not merely disaster for his whole policy, but the bankruptcy of the liberal movement in the United States of which he had been the leader.

Colonel House was ready to compromise with the French and the British (perhaps more ready than the President), but only provided the League were created and the Senate persuaded to approve it, for he regarded American participation as vital. From the moment of Wilson's return to France on March 14, he devoted himself chiefly to the work of revising the Covenant so as to meet American objections. Obviously this could not be successfully carried through without the help of the British and Italians and at least the passive approval of the French. At first Wilson was not inclined to consider seriously Senatorial objections, which were chiefly concentrated upon the need of excluding domestic questions from the purview of the League and a specific recognition of the Monroe Doctrine. House was fortunate in the intimacy of his friendship with Lord Robert Cecil, who was determined to omit no step that might establish the success of the League and who understood the need of meeting Senatorial opposition.

Sir William Wiseman later wrote that during the last twelve weeks of the Peace Conference 'Colonel House's main interest lay in methodical preparation for the setting up of the League. I remember the daily conferences he had with Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Eric Drummond, who had been selected as the first Secretary-General of the League.' House kept in close touch also with the representatives of the neutral powers, who were asked to present their comments on the draft Covenant.

'When I left Balfour,' wrote House on March 16, 'I crossed the street for a conference with the President and Lord Robert Cecil. We were together for an hour and a half, going over the Covenant for the League of Nations and discussing how it should be amended if at all. I am in favor of some amendments and some clarifications. By doing this it will make the Covenant a better instrument and will meet many of the objections of our Senate. The President . . . desires to leave it as it is, saying that any change will be hailed in the United States as yielding to the Senate, and he believes it will lessen rather than increase the chances of ratification. . . .

'*March* 18, 1919: Lord Robert Cecil and I had a long session concerning the amendments which we think the League of Nations might profitably add to the different articles of the Covenant. This meeting was preparatory to the after-dinner conference which we had with the President to-night. David Miller was also present. We dined with the President at the early hour of seven. . . .

'Our meeting was fairly successful. We agreed upon a number of changes. The President was more reasonable than he was the other day as to meeting the wishes of the Senate, but we found it nearly impossible to write what the Senate desires into the Covenant and for reasons which are entirely sufficient. We are perfectly willing to adopt them if the bal-

ance of the world would accept them, and if they do not cause more difficulties than they cure. If a special reservation of the Monroe Doctrine is made, Japan may want a reservation made regarding a sphere of influence in Asia, and other nations will ask for similar concessions, and there is no telling where it would end. If a statement is made that it is not intended to interfere in domestic affairs, this would please our Senators from the Pacific Slope, but it would displease all the Senators of pro-Irish tendencies, for they would declare that it was done at the instance of the English in order to keep the Irish question forever out of the League of Nations.

'We are not trying to act in an arbitrary way, but are sincerely desirous of meeting the views of those Senators who really have serious objections, but who do not understand our difficulties. No one can understand them without being here to formulate a Covenant.

'*March* 21, 1919: There was another meeting of the Neutrals with our Committee for the League of Nations.... These meetings have been a great success. The Neutrals seem happy to have had a hearing and we have given them all the time they desired. The amendments they have offered have usually been sensible.... There are no "long-distance" talkers among them. They had their papers well prepared and everything has gone expeditiously. Some of the prima donnas from the Great Powers might well take lessons from them.'

Formal revision of the Covenant was undertaken by the Commission at three meetings, on March 22, 24, and 26. The American demand for the exclusion of domestic questions from the control of the League was approved in principle; the Commission also agreed to Wilson's request that a member of the League might withdraw after giving two years' notice. Both of these changes were vital if Senate opposition were to be weakened, and it was noticeable that the

British and the Italians offered the heartiest support. The French, on the other hand, not merely objected to the facilitating of withdrawal, but asked for the creation of a permanent commission of military control under the League, which would almost certainly have ensured the rejection of the Covenant by the Senate. On this point also the British and Italians supported Wilson and the French suggestion was vetoed.

Certain of the more serious amendments were left for informal consideration before being taken up by the Commission, among them the proposal of the Japanese for a sentence in the Preamble declaring the equality of nations, and the American amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. In the mean time a revising committee was appointed to throw the draft articles into final form, and a committee to decide upon the site of the League. House was placed upon both.

'*March* 27, 1919: To show what a nimble mind the President has,' wrote House, 'it amused those of us near him last night to hear him state that he wanted to appoint "the old drafting committee." When he reached this point in the sentence, I slipped a memorandum under his eye giving a new drafting committee which Cecil and I had just agreed upon and which did not include any of the old committee excepting Cecil. The President just glanced at the memorandum and continued his sentence without a halt, "but I think it would be an imposition to ask them to serve again, therefore I name the following." He then looked down the list and read it as we had prepared it. I wondered how many had seen this little by-play, and I wondered how many saw the inconsistency of his remarks when Lord Robert Cecil was included in the new list, he having been on the old. . . .

'A great many visitors this afternoon, among them Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino. They are having no end of trouble with Hughes of Australia. He will not consent to anything in the way of satisfying Japan's desires. He

threatens if anything is passed by our Committee, he will bring it up at the Plenary Conference.'

The committee upon the site of the League of Nations, of which House was chairman, reached its decision without difficulty. As a matter of sentiment many would have been glad to have it placed in Brussels, as a gesture of reparation for the wanton attack on Belgium and the sufferings that she endured therefrom; a frequently rehearsed fable has made President Wilson solely responsible for the rejection of Brussels in favor of Geneva. Colonel House's papers make it clear that the committee were convinced that the League must have its seat in a neutral country, and that President Wilson exercised no direct influence in reaching a decision, except as his views were expressed by House.

'*March* 29, 1919: I called a meeting of the sub-Committee of the League of Nations which is to select a site for the seat of the League. There was no discussion, for we were all in favor of Geneva. I suggested that General Smuts be appointed to represent us in the negotiations with Switzerland so we may obtain the necessary concessions, and that we should not permit Switzerland to donate the ground desired, but that the League should pay for it. Switzerland was too small and we were too large to require even so small a sacrifice. This was agreed to by all. . . .

'I asked Professor Rappard later in the day to get up a list of the different pieces of ground which he thought might be available. I have in mind a park of about 1000 acres, within easy distance of Geneva by road and lake, and a beautiful water gate which might well be made a memorial to those who fought and died in the great World War. . . .

'There has been considerable difference between the Japanese delegates and Prime Minister Hughes of Australia concerning the resolution which the Japanese desire to have

included in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Hughes insists that nothing shall go in, no matter how mild and inoffensive. If anything is attempted, his purpose is to make a speech at the Plenary Conference and to raise a storm of protest not only in the Dominions but in the western part of the United States. I suggested to Smuts that we talk it out with Makino, who is one of the committee who came this morning to select a site for the League of Nations. Orlando is the other member.

'I told Makino frankly that while we would agree to the pallid formula they desired, yet unless Hughes promised not to make trouble we would be against putting it in. Smuts took the same position. I urged Makino to let the matter drop for the moment. I took this occasion to call his attention to the virulent abuse of the United States in which the Japanese Press were now indulging. The reason for this, he told me, was that they thought we were objecting to the clause in the Covenant which they, the Japanese delegates, had proposed. He promised to let their people know just where the trouble lay.

'*April* 2, 1919: Dr. Wellington Koo came to find what was being done concerning Kiau Chau. He is afraid that if the Covenant has an article concerning the Monroe Doctrine it might leave a loophole for the Japanese in their contention for a sphere of influence in Asia.'

VI

The chief objection to inserting a recognition or endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine in the Covenant was that it placed the United States in a special position. The French delegates, Bourgeois and Larnaude, contended that such an amendment might prevent action of the League in the Western Hemisphere and, conversely, might relieve the United States from the obligation to participate in the settlement of European affairs decided upon by the League. If

the Monroe Doctrine 'was not inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant,' Larnaude argued, 'it was unnecessary to refer to it. What was unnecessary might be dangerous. Relying on the special mention of the Monroe Doctrine in the Covenant, the United States might some day assert that the Doctrine forbade some act of intervention decided upon by the other members of the League.'

The British seemed thoroughly in favor of the proposed amendment designed to ensure the Monroe Doctrine, especially in view of the general conviction that without it the Senate would refuse to approve the Covenant. They were anxious, however, before endorsing this special demand of the United States, to reach some understanding regarding the future naval policies of Great Britain and the United States.

To the surprise of many and the undoubted relief of the British, President Wilson had not raised the question of the Freedom of the Seas, despite the fact that this formed one of the Fourteen Points and that Lloyd George had written to Colonel House at the time of the Armistice that the British were willing to discuss it. Not a few, including House himself, were convinced that, unless the Conference undertook a codification of maritime law which should endorse the principle of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war, future difficulties between the United States and Great Britain would be certain. The President, however, avoided the issue and thereby escaped what would doubtless have proved a most acrid controversy with the British.[1] Grateful

[1] Wilson himself explained his policy on the ground that under the League there would be no more wars except those conducted by the League against an 'outlaw' state, and therefore no neutrals. Hence the problem of the interference with neutral trade would not arise. The explanation is not entirely satisfactory, for the League could not be an absolute assurance against 'private wars,' and in any such it is certain that the same interference with neutral trade would take place as that against which the United States protested in 1915 and 1916.

for this, Mr. Lloyd George was none the less anxious to receive a more positive endorsement of Great Britain's special maritime position, perhaps a guarantee that the United States would not push naval competition to a point where they would threaten the supremacy of the British on the seas. Evidently the British naval experts were troubled by the prospect of American strength that would result from the programme of 1916. Long conversations took place between the British and American naval experts, which may be regarded as the genesis of the Washington Conference of 1921.

At the request of the President as well as of the British, House kept in close touch with Admiral Benson, who represented the United States in these conversations, and with Secretary Daniels who had come to Paris for a brief visit. He agreed entirely with Benson that it was impossible at this time to promise that the American fleet should always be inferior to the British, and that the United States could not discontinue the programme already under way without reciprocal concessions by the British. On the other hand, as he said to Benson, 'if the League of Nations was to have a chance of life it would not do to start its existence by increasing armaments instead of diminishing them.'

Although these discussions remained entirely unknown to the public, the problem was one of the most serious and delicate of the entire Peace Conference. If the British insisted upon settling the whole question before the League was approved and the Treaty signed, the Conference threatened to be prolonged indefinitely. House suggested that both nations should agree to stop building, after the existing programmes were completed, so that the two navies would retain the same relative strength. He insisted that any specific agreement as to future building programmes must be left until later.

The critical meeting of the League of Nations Committee

came upon April 10, and Cecil and House worked anxiously to reach an understanding so that nothing might interfere with the passing of the American amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. At House's suggestion, Lord Robert drafted a letter setting forth the British position.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

PARIS, *April* 8, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have found in exalted quarters that some of the recent utterances by high officials connected with the United States Navy have produced a very unfortunate impression. Very possibly they have been misunderstood, but they have in fact conveyed the idea that the naval policy of America is one of expansion; that the American ambition is to have a navy at least as strong or stronger than that of the British Empire, and so on. It is urged with some force that such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with the conception of the League of Nations, and that if it really represents the settled policy of the United States it could only lead sooner or later to a competition in arms between us and them. To inaugurate the League of Nations by a competition in armaments between its two chief supporters would doom it to complete sterility or worse. I cannot help feeling that there is a great deal of force in this contention, and I do believe that in some way or another the impression I have tried to describe ought to be removed if the League is to have a fair start. The position is undoubtedly complicated by the British sentiment about sea power. It has been now for centuries past an article of faith with every British statesman that the safety of the country depends upon her ability to maintain her sea defence, and like all deep-rooted popular sentiments it is founded in truth. Not only have we dominions scattered over the face of the world, each of which requires protection from the sea, but the teeming population of the islands of the

United Kingdom can only be fed and clothed provided the avenues of sea traffic are safe. We import four-fifths of our cereals, two-thirds of our meat, the whole of our cotton and almost the whole of our wool. If we were blockaded for a month or less we should have to surrender at discretion. That is not true of any other country in the world to the same extent. Least of all is it true of the United States, which could, as far as necessaries of life are concerned, laugh at any blockade.

I think you will believe me when I say that I am passionately desirous of Anglo-American friendship, and a convinced believer in its existence and durability, but I must freely admit that if I were British Minister of the Navy and I saw that British Naval safety was being threatened, even by America, I should have to recommend to my fellow countrymen to spend their last shilling in bringing our fleet up to the point which I was advised was necessary for their safety. I do not of course ask you to accept these views, but I do ask you to recognize their existence. I do not know whether in your country you have any traditional policy around which popular sentiment has crystallized in a similar way, but if you have you will be able to appreciate the kind of British feeling that exists on this point.

You have sometimes been good enough to invite me to speak to you as frankly as I would to one of my countrymen, and in that spirit I venture to ask you whether you could do anything to reassure us on this point. Would it be possible, for instance, for you to say that when the Treaty of Peace containing the League of Nations has been signed you would abandon or modify your new naval programme? I am sure that the British Government would be only too ready to give corresponding assurances. That would be what the French call a 'beau geste' with which to inaugurate the League; and if you could also intimate, however informally, that the two Governments would consult together from

year to year as to their naval programmes, and that the British sentiment on the matter would not be disregarded, I feel confident that the present very genuine anxieties on the point could be completely removed.

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

This letter was discussed by the President and House, and it was decided that Wilson should authorize House to reply, agreeing to periodic consultation between the two Governments regarding naval building in the future, but intimating that modification of the naval programme already voted by Congress would not be considered.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *April* 9, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This is about the kind of letter Cecil wants. He may object because I made clear that we intend carrying out the old programme. Both Gregory and Miller have read the letter and approve it.

Quick action is necessary because of our League of Nations meeting to-morrow night. This letter is of course in lieu of the one I was to send Lloyd George.

[E. M. H.]

Colonel House to Lord Robert Cecil

PARIS, *April* 9, 1919

DEAR LORD ROBERT:

Thank you for your letter of April eighth with the spirit of which I am in cordial agreement. If the kind of peace is made for which we are working and which will include a League of Nations, it will surely be necessary for us to live up to its intentions, and in order to do this I am sure you will find the United States ready to 'abandon or modify our new naval programme,' by which I understood you to mean our

programme not yet provided for by law, as our naval bill for the next fiscal year has not yet passed. I am also certain that you will find us ready and willing to consult with the British Government from year to year regarding the naval programmes of the two Governments. The President himself has, I think, made our intentions in this matter quite clear in a statement which he made to the London *Times* on December twenty-first in which he said: 'It is essential to the future peace of the world that there should be the frankest possible coöperation, and the most generous understanding between the two English-speaking Democracies. We comprehend and appreciate, I believe, the grave problems which the war has brought to the British people, and fully understand the special international questions which arise from the fact of your peculiar position as an Island Empire.'

I am sending this letter with the President's approval.

I am, my dear Lord Robert,

Yours very sincerely

E. M. HOUSE

On the morning of April 10, Cecil and House discussed this correspondence, which was designed to assure the British that the United States did not plan to enter upon a career of naval competition with Great Britain. Lord Robert at the request of President Wilson drafted a memorandum of this important conversation.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

PARIS, *April* 10, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

Here is the memorandum. If you approve it and could let me know that you approve by telephone or otherwise I will send it on to the Prime Minister.[1]

Yours very truly

ROBERT CECIL

[1] Pencilled note by E. M. H.: 'I read this letter and memo to the President to-night and he approved. April 10/19.'

Memorandum of Conversation between Colonel House and Lord Robert Cecil

April 10, 1919

I saw Colonel House this morning and showed him the draft letter a copy of which is annexed. He said to me that the difficulty was that the programme which the United States Government were now working on was one sanctioned some little time ago, and its execution had been postponed by reason of the diversion of all the energies of the United States authorities towards building the quantities of small craft which they had been constructing for the anti-submarine campaign. But for that it would have been completed, or nearly completed, some time ago. As it was, contracts had been made for the whole of it, and almost all of it was either begun or on the point of being begun. As all this had been done under the authority of Congress, he was himself doubtful whether the President could interfere with it.

I asked him whether it would not be possible for the President to postpone the commencement of those ships which had not been actually begun until after the Treaty of Peace had been signed, so that we might have time to discuss and consider the matter together.

He said he thought that might be possible, and would see what could be done in that direction. At the same time he repeated more than once that there was no idea in the mind of the President of building a fleet in competition with that of Great Britain. That was entirely foreign to his purpose. . . .

We agreed that the point of view of the fighting services made any accommodation between nations very difficult. He then urged that it really would be much better to leave the thing as it was left by his letter to me: that we might fully rely on the intention of the President not to build in competition with us; and that he thought that some arrangement as to the relative strengths of the fleets ought to be

arrived at; and that conversations with that object might well be begun as soon as the Treaty of Peace was signed. But he added that he was very much afraid that if the matter were stirred in public at all now, national spirit on both sides would be aroused and no accommodation would be possible.

I assured him that it was far from our purpose to have any public controversy on the subject, and that all that had passed between us was strictly confidential.

ROBERT CECIL

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Draft letter]

PARIS, *April* 10, 1919

Many thanks for your letter with the spirit of which I am in hearty agreement. Indeed, I have already written to Mr. Lloyd George who had spoken to me on the subject that once the League of Nations was part of the Treaty of Peace it will be necessary for all of us to live up to its spirit and to do this it will be inconsistent to continue to increase armaments either by land or sea. That is as I have ascertained also the view of the President. In the same way it will be part of our duty under the Covenant to interchange information as to our naval programmes and I should hope that in the case of America and England that obligation will be carried out in cordial coöperation. You will not forget in this connection the recognition by the President of Great Britain's special position as to sea power?

VII

It may have been that Mr. Lloyd George was disappointed not to have a more specific promise from the United States to avoid naval competition and especially an agreement that the existing American naval programme would be curtailed. If so, he did not allow his feelings to interfere with Cecil's desire to support Wilson's amendment on the Monroe Doc-

trine, which was brought up at the meeting of the League of Nations Commission on the evening of April 10. The debate was prolonged because of the unwillingness of the French to accept the amendment, and followed lively discussion on the question of the use of French as the sole official language for the Covenant and the League, as well as on the seat of the League. In the first of these questions the French stood out against the British, Italians, and Americans; in the second they supported the eloquent arguments of M. Hymans for placing the League organization at Brussels rather than Geneva. The recommendation of the Committee in favor of Geneva was finally passed, though by a narrow margin.

'One of the most important meetings of the Committee for the League of Nations was held last night at eight o'clock,' wrote House on April 11. 'We heard the women present their claims in a series of admirable short speeches. Five minutes was as much as any one used, but each speech was crowded with a wealth of argument and statement within the time limit. I think the entire Committee was impressed.

'Then followed one of the stormiest meetings we have had at all. There was a row with Bourgeois at the beginning over the question of the use of French for the official text of the League. After that, we fought for another hour over the insertion of a clause covering the Monroe Doctrine. Here again, it was the French. Every one else was willing. It seems the irony of fate that France, who has more at stake in the League of Nations than any other country, should have tried to keep us from putting in a clause which will practically make certain the acceptance of the League by the American people and the Senate. . . . The President finally made an impassioned speech on the subject. He did not speak longer than ten minutes, but what he said was full of eloquence and good sense. It convinced everybody but

the French delegates. . . . We finally passed the clause, or thought we had. . . .

'Cecil bears the brunt of explanation and his patience is marvellous.'

The amendment to the Covenant which President Wilson brought forward was evolved after careful study of various formulas, especially of one advised by Mr. Taft who cabled a suggested draft to the President. It avoided putting the United States in the position of asking an especial favor and at the same time it gave indirectly an international sanction to the Monroe Doctrine.[1]

[1] Mr. Taft's cable to the President was as follows:

'If you bring back the Treaty with the League of Nations in it make more specific reservations of the Monroe Doctrine, fix a term for the duration of the League, and the limit of armament, require expressly unanimity of action of Executive Council and body of Delegates and add to Article 15 a provision that where the Executive Council of the Body of Delegates finds the difference to grow out of an exclusively domestic policy, it shall recommend no settlement, the ground will be completely cut from under the opponents of the League in the Senate. Addition to Article 15 will answer objection as to Japanese immigration, as well as tariffs under Article 21. Reservation of the Monroe Doctrine might be as follows: "Any American state or states may protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of the Government whose territory it is whether a member of the League or not, and may, in the interests of American peace, object to and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any Power outside the Western Hemisphere."

'Monroe Doctrine reservation alone would probably carry the Treaty, but others would make it certain.

'WILLIAM H. TAFT.'

President Wilson first remodelled Taft's suggested reservation to read: 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect or deny the right of any American state or states to protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of any American Government whose territory is threatened, whether a member of the League or not, or in the interest of American peace, to object to and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any Power outside the Western Hemisphere.' This reservation attempted to define the Monroe Doctrine without naming it. The British preferred to name it without defining it, and suggested to House the following: 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect any international engagement or understanding for

'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine for securing the maintenance of peace.'

To this the French objected, but both Cecil and Orlando offered warm support of the amendment. It 'had been inserted,' said Lord Robert, 'in order to quiet doubts and to calm misunderstandings. It did not make the substance of the Doctrine more or less valid. He understood this amendment to say what he believed to be implicit in the Covenant, what he believed to be true — that there was nothing in the Monroe Doctrine which conflicted with the Covenant, and therefore nothing in the Covenant which interfered with international understandings like the Monroe Doctrine.' When Larnaude argued that it might be interpreted to mean that the obligation on the United States to intervene in Europe was lessened, Orlando replied that the Monroe Doctrine 'had not prevented the United States from intervening in this war. They would be more ready to do so when they had accepted the additional obligations of membership of the League. He could not understand Mr. Larnaude's doubts.'

As the French still objected, President Wilson made his final appeal. What he said was evidently not effectively reported in the *procès-verbal*, for House refers to it as an 'impassioned speech' and Miller as a 'speech of witching eloquence — a speech made after midnight, which left the secretaries gasping with admiration, their pencils in their hands, their duties forgotten, and hardly a word taken down.' [1] The basis of the President's appeal, so far as the abbreviated *procès-verbal* records it, was sentimental:

securing the peace of the world such as treaties of arbitration and the Monroe Doctrine.' The final amendment chosen was obviously closely related to this British draft.

[1] David Hunter Miller, *What Really Happened at Paris*, 416.

'At a time when the world was in the grip of absolutism,' he declared, 'one of the two or three then free States of Europe suggested to the United States that they should take some political step to guard against the spread of absolutism to the American Continent. Among these States was England. Acting upon this suggestion the principles of the Monroe Doctrine were laid down, and from that day to this, they had proved a successful barrier against the entrance of absolutism into North and South America. Now that a document was being drafted which was the logical extension of the Monroe Doctrine to the whole world, was the United States to be penalized for her early adoption of this policy? A hundred years ago the Americans had said that the absolutism of Europe should not come to the American Continent. When there had come a time when the liberty of Europe was threatened by the spectre of a new absolutism, America came gladly to help in the preservation of European liberty. Was this issue going to be debated, was the Commission going to scruple on words at a time when the United States was ready to sign a Covenant which made her for ever part of the movement for liberty? Was this the way in which America's early service to liberty was to be rewarded? The Commission could not afford to deprive America of the privilege of joining in this movement.'

The objections of the French to the amendment were not removed by Wilson's appeal. Larnaude replied 'that he had no doubt that the United States would come again to the help of Europe if it were threatened by absolutism. Future wars might not, however, be wars of liberation. They might be economic in origin. The question was, therefore, whether the United States would come to the help of France should she be engaged in a struggle with a country which happened to be quite as liberal as herself.'

So strongly did they feel that, although on April 10 the

amendment was declared to be adopted, at the final meeting on the following evening they brought the question up again. As Wilson refused all the substitute amendments which they offered, they finally declared that they would have to make a reservation and intimated that the matter would be raised in the Plenary Conference.

The meeting was prolonged by the effort of the Japanese to introduce their amendment to the Preamble, consisting simply of the words 'by the endorsement of the principle of the equality of Nations and the just treatment of their nationals.'

'The President was for accepting it,' wrote House, 'but Cecil, under instructions from his Government, could not; and since I knew that Hughes would fight it and make an inflammatory speech in the Plenary Session, I urged the President to stay with the British, which he did.'

A majority of the Commission actually voted for the Japanese amendment, but as the support was not unanimous, President Wilson, as chairman, declared it not adopted.[1] The meeting did not adjourn until ten minutes of one in the morning, largely upon the insistence of Wilson who realized that the moment when a committee wishes to stop work is the moment to force a decision. 'Long experience in such

[1] The vote was eleven to six in favor of the Japanese amendment, Wilson and House not voting. When the French called Wilson's attention to the fact that a majority had voted in its favor, the President replied that 'decisions of the Commission were not valid unless unanimous. . . . There was only one case where a decision of the majority had prevailed, and that was in the case of determining the Seat of the League. In that case it had been necessary to accept the opinion of the majority inasmuch as no other procedure was possible if the question was to be decided at all.'

If the French had wished to press their opposition to the Monroe Doctrine amendment on this principle, they might have blocked its insertion in the Covenant. Doubtless they did not care so directly to oppose President Wilson without definite instructions from Clemenceau; hence they merely entered reservations.

matters,' wrote House, 'teaches that it is the last quarter of an hour that does the work. Every one practically gave up and we passed matters almost as fast as we could read them during the last fifteen minutes. . . . Around half-past twelve Cecil asked how long the meeting was to continue. I said until daylight or until we had finished.'

Thus the Commission ended its labors, leaving final changes in details to the drafting commission.[1] It left to another committee the duty of preparing resolutions designed to set the League in operation as soon as possible.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *April* 26, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

After many conferences between Cecil, Miller, and myself we have thought best, if you approve, that you and the two Prime Ministers should pass at your Monday morning meeting the enclosed resolution so it can be presented at the Plenary Conference on Monday afternoon.

Lloyd George, I understand, agrees to it, so it is only Clemenceau who will have to be considered.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Resolution for the Plenary Conference on the Covenant of the League of Nations

The Conference, having considered and adopted the amended Covenant presented by the Commission on the League of Nations, resolves:

1. That the first Secretary-General of the League shall be Honorable Sir James Eric Drummond, K.C.M.G., C.B.

[1] This drafting committee, 'taking a very liberal view of its powers,' inserted the Red Cross article, which Mr. Miller says was due to Colonel House. (*What Really Happened at Paris*, 421.)

2. That until such time as the Assembly shall have selected the first four Members of the League to be represented on the Council in accordance with Article IV of the Covenant, Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Greece, and Spain shall be members of the Council.

3. That the Powers to be represented on the Council of the League of Nations are requested to name representatives who shall form a Committee of nine to prepare plans for the organization of the League and for the establishment of the Seat of the League, and to make arrangements and to prepare the agenda for the first meeting of the Assembly. This Committee shall report both to the Council and to the Assembly of the League.[1]

Two days later, on April 28, the Peace Conference approved the Covenant as amended without the change of a word. Up to the last moment the fear persisted that Mr. Hughes of Australia would make the anti-League speech in the open Session which he had been threatening during the winter, and that M. Bourgeois or M. Larnaude would publicly voice the demand for an international military organization or the objections to the article on the Monroe Doctrine which they had expressed in the Commission. But Clemenceau allowed nothing to interfere with the prompt ratification of the Covenant, not even the scruples of the French delegates themselves.

'To-day has been eventful,' wrote House. 'The Plenary Session unanimously adopted the draft of the Covenant for the League of Nations which our Committee wrote. It also passed the Resolution which the President offered. It not only names the nations which are to compose the Council of

[1] The Committee as appointed consisted of M. Jacquemyns (Belgium), M. Magelhaes (Brazil), M. Pichon (France), Lord Robert Cecil (Great Britain), M. Venizelos (Greece), Marquis Imperiali (Italy), Viscount Chinda (Japan), M. Quinones de Leon (Spain), Colonel House (U.S.A.).

Nine, but also names the nations which are to compose the Committee on Organization. . . . Clemenceau put the "steam roller" promptly to work as soon as those who wanted to make speeches to go in the *procès-verbal* had finished. Everything was passed almost before the Conference could catch its breath.'

Nothing is more clear than that the revision of the Covenant, which was largely designed to meet the objections of the United States Senate, could never have been carried through, nor the amended Covenant passed, without the hearty support of the other Principal Powers. Orlando stood firmly behind Wilson and House upon every occasion. Cecil brought his personal influence and his debating power to aid in the passing of the Monroe Doctrine amendment. The Japanese yielded their own special amendment at the same time that they supported that of Wilson. The objections of the French delegates, which might have spelled ruin for the American programme, were finally swept aside by the French Prime Minister himself.

It would have been surprising indeed if, after accepting the special American demands as regards the League of Nations, the other Principal Powers had not expected and exacted concessions that touched their own special aspirations.

APPENDIX

A Typical Page from the Visitors' Book or 'Log' kept by the Yeomen at the Door of Colonel House's Apartment at the Hôtel de Crillon

March 18, 1919

In	
9.15	Mr. Rappard
9.35	Mr. Frazier
9.35	Mr. Straus
9.45	Sir William Wiseman
9.50	Admiral Benson
9.50	Mr. Sheldon
9.50	Mr. Norman Davis
10.10	Mr. Peabody
10.15	Mr. R. H. Lord
10.20	Mr. Galavrias
10.35	Mr. Gregory
10.35	Mr. Desprit
10.50	Mr. Melville Stone
10.55	Colonel Shannon
10.55	Mr. Straus
11.00	Captain Walter G. Davis
11.10	General Churchill
11.15	Mr. T. W. Lamont
11.40	Mr. James
11.55	Admiral Benson
12.05	Commander Allen
12.10	Lord Robert Cecil
12.15	Mr. Rappard
	Mr. Lansing
	Mr. D. H. Miller
12.25	Mr. H. Wickham Steed
12.55	Ambassador Willard
1.45	Colonel Wallace
2.20	Mr. E. T. Williams
2.35	Mr. Vance C. McCormick
2.50	Mr. Oulahan
2.55	President Wilson
3.00	Mr. Lloyd George
3.00	Sir Maurice Hankey
3.00	M. Clemenceau
3.00	M. André Tardieu
3.00	Sir Philip Kerr
3.30	Mr. Ferguson
3.37	Judge M. B. Parker
4.10	Mr. Norman Davis
	Mr. J. M. Keynes
4.20	Lord Sumner
4.35	General Richardson
4.55	Mr. H. Wickham Steed
5.05	The Spanish Ambassador
5.20	M. Paul Hymans
5.30	Baron Makino
	Count Chinda
5.30	Mr. Davison
6.05	10 Newspaper Reporters
6.50	Mr. McCormick

CHAPTER XII

FIUME AND SHANTUNG

Every question associated with this settlement wears a new aspect — a new aspect given it by the very victory for right for which Italy has made the supreme sacrifice.

President Wilson's Manifesto, April 23, 1919

I

THE compromises of mid-April made possible the American amendments to the Covenant and its acceptance by the Plenary Conference; they also brought within sight the completion of the Treaty with Germany, and on April 14 the Germans were invited to send delegates to Versailles. But the period of crisis was not ended, for two important questions remained unsettled. The Japanese demanded that German rights in Shantung should be ceded to them, and the Italians threatened to withdraw from participation in the German Treaty unless their claims in the Adriatic were satisfied.

The problem of Italian claims had been shelved during the early months of the Conference, although many informal conversations were carried on by Signor Orlando, President Wilson, and Colonel House. The result of this postponement, in a certain sense, was to make an ultimate solution more difficult of discovery, since it gave time for the development of nationalistic aspirations in Italy. It was natural, also, that the Italians should become more insistent as they observed the concessions which Wilson was obliged to make to the French and the British.

In the spring of 1918, hopes had been high that an amicable arrangement could be made between Italian and Jugo-Slav claims, for Orlando seemed to approve the Pact of Rome. But with the complete collapse of Austria in the

autumn of 1918, the Italians were evidently appalled by the prospect of a strong Jugo-Slav State on the other side of the Adriatic; they spoke of the Croats and Slovenes as enemies, and, not content with the Treaty of London, they set up a claim to Fiume, which, according to the Treaty, had been assigned to Croatia.

At the time of the Armistice, Orlando attempted to make formal reservation to Point IX of the Fourteen Points, so as to give free scope to later claims; this reservation, if it be admitted that it was actually made,[1] was never published and never communicated formally to President Wilson, as in the case of the two reservations on the Freedom of the Seas and Reparations. It thus remained a matter of doubt as to whether Italy was legally bound by the Fourteen Points in the matter of the Austro-Italian frontiers. President Wilson apparently made no attempt to advance the contention that Italy was so bound, despite the strong argument he might have adduced; in fact he later (April 20) admitted to the Council of Four that he did not regard her as bound by the Fourteen Points in making peace with Austria.

President Wilson thus not merely failed to dispose of the Secret Treaties at the start of the Conference by an insistence upon the Fourteen Points, but weakened his position further by yielding his strongest argument; namely, that Italy was bound if not legally, certainly morally by the pre-Armistice Agreement. He made the further mistake, which he himself afterward recognized, of approving Italy's claim to the Brenner frontier, perhaps the least justifiable of the entire Italian

[1] Sonnino read a draft reservation on Point IX on October 30 to the Prime Ministers, but this was never presented to the Supreme War Council. At the meeting of the Supreme War Council on November 1, Orlando referred to this reservation, but when Clemenceau directed attention to other topics he failed to read it to the Council. That he himself did not believe that a satisfactory reservation had been made was indicated by his suggestion to the Prime Ministers on November 3 that Wilson should be informed of the Italian attitude on Point IX. But this information was never officially sent to the President. (See above, Chapter VI.)

case.[1] Some years later, Colonel House discussed this issue with Mr. Frazier, who during the course of the Peace Conference was present at many of the negotiations between the President and the Italians.

'Frazier told me,' wrote House, 'how Wilson promised Orlando to give Italy the Tyrol. He said that Orlando had asked him, Frazier, to interpret for the two of them and that no one else was present excepting Wilson, Orlando, and himself. Orlando made a plea for Fiume and Wilson replied, "I cannot consent for Fiume to go to Italy, but you may count upon me for the Brenner line." This did not satisfy Orlando, but he held Wilson to his promise. . . . I have often wondered just why Wilson consented to this line. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and I discussed it during the Armistice proceedings and the three of us came to the conclusion that the Tyrol should not be taken from Austria. They were committed by the Secret Treaties, but thought the United States could protest.' [2]

On the other hand, the position of the Italian delegates was not strong. Hostile political forces in Italy threatened to overthrow the Orlando Ministry. Unlike Clemenceau, who laid down a careful programme of French claims from

[1] Lord Bryce later wrote to Colonel House regarding the cession of this region to Italy: 'I earnestly hope that the 200,000 or more German-speaking Tirolese who inhabit it will not be handed over to Italy. That would be a graver departure from the principle of nationality than any that arose between Italy and the Yugo-Slavs of the Adriatic. Italy never had any rule at all in Central Tirol, and has no shadow of right to annex it. The people are . . . innocent of any guilt for this war, and would bitterly resent being subjected to Italian rule.'

[2] Colonel House to C. S., May 28, 1928. In May, 1919, President Wilson said to C. S. that his own approval of the Brenner frontier was 'based on insufficient study.' Mr. Baker, who rarely criticizes Mr. Wilson, says (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 146): 'Already the President had, unfortunately, promised the Brenner Pass boundary to Orlando.'

which he might withdraw gradually and safely so as to reach a compromise, and who was willing to fight extremists on his own side, Orlando found himself pushed from demand to demand by the rising flood of Italian enthusiasm. He did not dare yield any claims for fear of political disaster at home. He knew that if the worst came to the worst he could rely upon the French and the British to approve the Treaty of London; but he did not want the Treaty of London because it excluded Fiume, and the British and French made plain their unwillingness to give Fiume to Italy.

The whole problem was thus confused to the point where effective concessions on one side or the other proved impossible. The Italians from the beginning of the Conference had endeavored to stress their lively and sincere sympathy with the ideals of President Wilson. Orlando had given the heartiest support to the President and Cecil in drafting the Covenant. He had completely fallen in with the American policy of non-intervention in Russia, except for the sending in of a relief expedition. The real clash of interests was between the British and French on the one hand and the Italians on the other. Yet the irony of fate brought it about that the open difference which threatened to split the Conference developed between Wilson and Orlando.

For the Italian delegates personally, especially Orlando, Colonel House had the most cordial feelings, which were maintained through numerous conversations. Writing towards the end of the Peace Conference, House recorded:

'I do not know what experiences the President had with Orlando when I was not present, but I do know that when the three of us were together and when Orlando and I worked alone, I found him one of the most satisfactory of colleagues. He was always courteous, even under trying circumstances, and he was generous almost to a fault in yielding to the American view when his own country was not involved. And

Al Colonnello E. House, infaticabile silenzioso grande artefice della pace nel mondo, — V. E. Orlando fedele la sua ammirazione più fervida ed un'amicizia più forte di ogni evento.
Parigi 6 aprile '19.

VITTORIO EMANUELE ORLANDO

even in negotiations involving Italy, he endeavored to be fair, and when, from our point of view, he was not, it was because of the pressure brought to bear upon him from Rome and from his Italian colleagues. I shall always remember him as an able, upright gentleman who strove to do his best under very difficult conditions.'

Because of his personal regard for Orlando and his conviction that the interests of Italy and the United States at the Peace Conference were closely allied, Colonel House maintained with him an intimacy which is reflected in the memoranda of numerous conferences, beginning immediately after the Armistice.[1] They make plain that House was opposed to the full Italian claims. Thus, on January 9, he said to Orlando that he was 'not in favor of giving territory to Italy which might sow the seeds of future discord and war. . . . If the Italians insisted upon the line drawn by the Pact of London, which included Dalmatia, it would certainly mean war . . . the Czecho-Slovaks would protest more vehemently against the inclusion of Fiume in the Italian realm than the Yugo-Slavs.'

On the other hand, House was more keenly alive than most of the Americans to the sympathy manifested and the services rendered by the Italians in the struggle to establish the League; and he counted upon Italian assistance in the equally difficult task of putting the League into operation. It is possible that Colonel House's anxiety to achieve the successful establishment of the League led him to appreciate more fully than he otherwise would the desirability of com-

[1] These memoranda are more numerous and specific than in the case of Clemenceau or the British, for as Orlando spoke no English, Mr. Frazier acted as interpreter and preserved a careful record of the conversations. D. H. Miller says of Orlando's English: 'I was talking one evening with him and Marshal Joffre, who said to Orlando, in French, "Do you know any English?" To which Orlando replied that he knew very little — "Nothing," he added, "except these words, 'eleven o'clock, I don't agree, good-bye.'"' (*Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921, 274.)

promise with the Italians, just as it had proved necessary to compromise with the French and British. He had always endeavored to make plain to Orlando the importance he placed upon the continuance of cordial Italo-American relations, and Orlando evidently regarded House as one who would present Italian claims to the President in the friendliest light.

President Wilson, also, entertained the kindliest personal feelings towards Signor Orlando. Among House's papers is an interesting note from the President, suggesting that House make plain to Orlando that he cannot agree to yield Fiume to Italy: 'Perhaps you will think it best to break this to our friend, of whom I am really fond and whom I long to help.'

It has been alleged that the cordiality of House's attitude toward Orlando, at a moment when most of the Americans were believed by the Italians to be unfriendly, and his anxiety to discover a workable compromise, actually lessened the chances of a compromise; the Italians, it is stated, believed that the American Delegation was divided against itself, and this impression rendered them more unyielding in their demands than they would otherwise have been. Whether or not Colonel House's attitude led the Italians to believe that the President would ultimately make larger concessions than he actually intended, it is true that the American Delegation was not agreed upon the advice it gave Wilson.

The specialists responsible for the study of the Adriatic problem were all convinced that any arrangement that deprived the Jugo-Slavs of either northern Dalmatia or Fiume would be vicious and unwise; they felt that if Italy secured 'even nominal sovereignty over Fiume as the price of supporting the League,' the League would become 'a coalition to maintain an unjust settlement.' This opinion was carried to the President by letter, and personally by Pro-

fessor Douglas Johnson, Chief of the Division of Boundary Geography, whose judgment Wilson regarded as authoritative. Other members of the American Delegation, such as David Hunter Miller, George Louis Beer, and James T. Shotwell, with interests in aspects of the general settlement other than the Italian, 'felt that attention had been concentrated too narrowly . . . upon local questions of demography. The issue was of large significance solely because it involved matters of general policy; and should be approached from that angle.' [1] This group sought by conversations with the Italians to discover some compromise, and Colonel House encouraged them to investigate every opportunity.

II

The Adriatic question became acute in the first week of April, precisely at the moment of crisis over Reparations, the Saar, and the Rhine frontier. On April 2, at the end of a long conversation that covered the entire range of disputed topics, President Wilson asked House to explain to the Italians the American proposals, which, while granting them the Treaty of London line in the Tyrol, assigned eastern Istria, Fiume, and Dalmatia to the Jugo-Slavs.

'He wished me to outline to Orlando the boundary and other terms for Italy,' wrote House in his diary. 'I do not relish the job, but I promised to do it. I shall see Orlando on Friday and tell him just where we wish the northern and eastern boundaries of Italy to be.'

As it turned out, the conference with Orlando came on Thursday instead of Friday, for on Thursday morning Lloyd George suddenly raised the question of the Adriatic in the

[1] J. T. Shotwell, *George Louis Beer*, 110. See also David Hunter Miller, 'The Adriatic Negotiations at Paris,' in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921.

Council of Four and suggested calling in the Jugo-Slav representatives. Orlando decided to absent himself from the afternoon meeting, and so informed the President.

'As for the very delicate matter,' Orlando wrote Wilson, 'of giving a further hearing to the representatives of the Slovenes and Croats — against whom Italy has been at war for four years — I would not insist against it, just as I would not exclude the advisability of giving a hearing to the representatives of any other enemy people on whom it is a question of imposing conditions. But, on the other hand, as no such debate has yet been granted, I insist in thinking it advisable to abstain from taking part in a meeting which, as things stand, must necessarily give rise to debate.

'I realize, with keen regret, that my absence may give rise to an impression, which I should be the first to wish to avoid, that a misunderstanding has arisen between the Italian Government and the Allied and Associated Governments. I think however that such an impression will not be given, as the meeting this afternoon is not the meeting of the representatives of the four Powers, but a conversation between the President of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France with those gentlemen.

'I earnestly hope, Mr. President, that in this way the reason for my absence will be seen in its true light, i.e., not as an evidence of disagreement, but as an act of consideration towards colleagues, whose wish it is to obtain all the data available in order to form their own opinion on the grave matters under consideration.'

Instead of going to the Council of Four, Orlando came to the Crillon to see Colonel House. But neither then nor at later conferences could either suggest a workable compromise.

'The most important business of the afternoon,' wrote House on April 3, 'was my interview with Orlando. He is disturbed over the turn affairs took this morning at the meeting of the Council of Four. Lloyd George . . . precipitated something akin to a panic by suggesting that the Adriatic question be taken up. It developed that no one but Orlando was in favor of Fiume going to Italy. Lloyd George then suggested, and the President and Clemenceau agreed, that the Jugo-Slavs present their case this afternoon. This put the finishing touches to Orlando, and while he was invited to take part in the Italian funeral he declined to do so. . . . He looks upon Jugo-Slavs much as the French look upon Germans, and he is as indignant as Clemenceau would be if the Germans were asked to give their views upon the left bank of the Rhine.[1]

'I had all the maps out and Orlando and I went over the lines. He was not happy when he saw that the line ran west of Fiume. He declared Italy could never accept such a settlement. We would have little difficulty if it were not for Fiume. If the peace settlement had been made just after the Armistice, all these questions could have been settled without difficulty, for Fiume would never have been injected into the terms by the Italians, nor the Sarre Basin and Rhenish Republic by the French.

'*April* 7, 1919: Orlando came at noon to present a new plan for the settlement of the Adriatic question. . . . He desired to make a free city to the west of Fiume. . . . I promised to take it up with the President, which I did, and he turned it down as quickly as I did myself.

'*April* 15, 1919: Orlando asked to come around this morning at ten and he was with me for a half-hour. . . . I begged him not to be discouraged about the settlement of their frontier. The questions between France on the one

[1] A very clear example of the atmosphere in Paris which made it impossible to present adequately the contentions of any 'ex-enemy.'

side and the United States and England on the other, were much more difficult and had seemed insoluble. However, we have been working upon them for several months with Clemenceau on the one hand, and Lloyd George on the other, and now they were being settled to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The Italian questions could also be settled provided there was a disposition to yield a little by all parties, and if there was a continuous discussion of them, which must necessarily bring out new ideas and some compromises. . . . Fiume was the main difficulty. If we could get over that hurdle, the rest would be settled in a canter.'

As a compromise possibility, Colonel House put forward the plan of making Fiume a free city under the administration of the League of Nations, thus guaranteeing the autonomy of the 25,000 Italians there and also the protection of the economic needs of the Slav hinterland. The American specialists were not convinced that the plan would protect the rights of the Jugo-Slavs and so advised the President.[1] Wilson sympathized with the specialists, but recognized the need of making some compromise: 'I am ready to fight for the line you gentlemen have given me,' he said to Douglas Johnson, 'with one possible exception: It may seem best to make Fiume an independent port.' [2]

[1] Thus Douglas Johnson wrote to D. H. Miller on April 19, sending a copy to Colonel House: 'In presenting to our higher authorities the draft articles on Fiume will you, in order to avoid possible misunderstanding, kindly make clear that, in common with all our territorial specialists who have studied this problem, I am most strongly opposed to the proposed compromise solution on the grounds that in principle it is fundamentally unjust to a small and weak nation, in practice unworkable, and from the standpoint of the future fraught with gravest danger to the prestige and even to the ultimate success of a League of Nations which can afford to guarantee only those arrangements which are inherently righteous.'

See also letter of five specialists to President Wilson, printed in Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 266.

[2] From notes made at the time by Douglas Johnson, cited in Baker, *op. cit.*, II, 146.

But this suggestion by no means satisfied Signor Orlando, who realized that failure to bring Fiume under the Italian flag meant the overthrow of his Ministry. On April 13, he protested against calling in the Germans to receive the Treaty; on the following day he had a long conversation with Wilson, during the course of which the President handed him a memorandum embodying his proposed compromise making Fiume an international port which 'should enjoy a very considerable degree of genuine autonomy,' although he also proposed that it be included within the customs system of the new Jugo-Slav State.

The interview was painful; the personal feeling of each toward the other was cordial, Wilson offered all that his conscience permitted, Orlando was definite in declaring it was insufficient; unless some agreement could be reached, a break seemed unavoidable.

'*April* 15, 1919: The President said,' wrote House the next day, 'that only once before had he experienced such an unhappy time as with Orlando yesterday. Once when he was President of Princeton it was necessary to expel a student. His mother, a delicate woman, called and pleaded with him for an hour and a half, urging that she was about to undergo a capital operation and if the boy was expelled she would die and her death would be due to him. His reply was that his responsibility to the College was greater than his responsibility for her health, and he declined to grant her request. She had the operation, but recovered.' [1]

In the existing temper of the principals, effective compromise was a forlorn hope. 'So long as the Italian demands included Fiume,' writes Miller, 'any successful result of negotiations between President Wilson and the Italian re-

[1] Cf. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, II, 152 (Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927).

presentatives was impossible. So-called "compromise proposals" could mean only that one side or the other should give way.' [1]

Colonel House himself, after four days' intensive search for a formula of compromise, began to despair.

'The President and I discussed the question of Fiume,' he wrote on April 18, 'and I urged him to settle it one way or the other. I have about come to the conclusion that since we cannot please the Italians by compromise, we might as well do what seems best in the judgment of our experts, and that is to give it directly to the Jugo-Slavs, safeguarding the rights of all those contributory to the port. This solution appealed to the President. I urged him to take it up with Lloyd George and Clemenceau and commit them in order to present a united front.'

But the French and the British were unwilling to declare flatly that they would not approve giving Fiume to Italy, since Orlando would then demand the Treaty of London line, to which they were pledged; they would then be out of line with Wilson, who insisted that eastern Istria and northern Dalmatia should go to the Jugo-Slavs, although the Treaty of London assigned them to Italy.

House tried a final compromise. He would yield eastern Istria to Italy and place Fiume and northern Dalmatia under the League of Nations' administration for a number of years, their ultimate sovereignty to be determined by the League. This would put Fiume under somewhat the same régime as the Saar, a solution which Lloyd George had advanced in the Council of Four on the morning of April 8. House raised this solution with Clemenceau on April 15. 'I suggested that he might tell Orlando that the only way he

[1] D. H. Miller, 'The Adriatic Negotiations at Paris,' *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921, p. 273.

could see out of their difficulty was for the League of Nations to take over the disputed territory for a given time.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *April* 19, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This is what I would suggest saying to the Italians at your meeting to-morrow:

(1) We will give you the line agreed upon in the Pact of London as far as it touches the old Austro-Hungarian boundaries.[1]

(2) Fiume and all the territory in dispute south of Fiume to be held in trust by the Five Powers as trustees for the League of Nations, the actual disposition to be made at some time in the future when in the judgment of the League of Nations it is wise to do so.

This will give the Italians a chance to educate their public to what they must know will be the final decision.

I proposed this to the other Commissioners after you left and they all agreed. At White's suggestion, it was decided to draw this up in the form of a letter for us all to sign. I asked Lansing to prepare it, but since I cannot lay hands on him for the moment, I am sending this in advance.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

This proposal was put to Orlando on April 20, not by

[1] House evidently means as far south as the Gulf of Quarnero. The next paragraph and his diary make plain his intention of putting Dalmatia under the League. The proposal as described in the diary is: 'Accept the line of the Pact of London as far as it touches the boundaries of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Everything south of that, including Fiume and Dalmatia, to be taken over by the Five Powers as trustees under the League of Nations. The fate of the territory to be determined later when passions cool.' Nothing is said about the islands in the letter, but House was evidently prepared to yield to Italy all the islands regarded by them as essential to their strategic security.

Wilson who thought that it yielded too much, but by Lloyd George. Wilson finally told House that if George and Clemenceau would 'put it up' as a recommendation of their own, he would consider it. But Orlando refused it definitely. So strongly had feeling in Italy been aroused that he did not dare confess failure by yielding or even postponing the claim to the Italian right of sovereignty over Fiume. He was impressed by the fact that Wilson had made broad concessions to France; why not also to Italy? Wilson, on the other hand, because he had just yielded to France, was so much the less inclined to yield to Italy.[1] For three days the Council of Four debated fruitlessly, and Wilson meditated the possibility of issuing a public statement of the American position. He asked the advice of the Commissioners.

'*April* 21, 1919: The President came to the Crillon this morning,' wrote House, 'for a conference with the Commission. He read us a statement of the Italian situation which it is his purpose to give out. He was not certain whether to do it immediately or wait until a break actually occurred. I suggested discussing the matter with George and Clemenceau and being governed by their advice.

'*April* 22, 1919: A busy day with all sorts of plans and suggestions for the settlement of the Italian question, which has grown acute. Orlando has ceased to attend the meetings of the Council of Four and relations are very strained. The whole world is speculating as to whether the Italians are "bluffing" or whether they really intend going home and not signing the Peace unless they have Fiume. It is not unlike a game of poker.

'*April* 23, 1919: The Italian situation is almost the sole

[1] Cf. Mr. Baker's remark: 'He approached the Italian problems no doubt with all the more passion and determination because in the French crisis just passed he had had to make painful concessions in order to keep the Allies together, preserve world order, and arrive at any peace at all.' (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 159.)

topic of conversation. This morning I suggested to the President that he put out his statement, but advised him to confer with Clemenceau and Lloyd George before doing so.'

Exactly what passed between Wilson and the French and British Prime Ministers on the morning of April 23 is not clear. They talked of Wilson's statement and they were so far in agreement with its contents that they discussed presenting to Orlando a memorandum written by Balfour, which emphasized even more effectively than Wilson's the objections to Italy's sovereignty over Fiume.[1] But although they were told by the President that 'it was his intention to publish his memorandum . . . this evening,' they took no definite steps either to dissuade him from his purpose or to approve it. The publication of Wilson's manifesto by itself thus isolated him, and when the storm of Italian fury broke it was upon the President's head.

The basis of Wilson's manifesto was the change that had come in the Adriatic problem, as well as in the spirit of Europe, since the signing of the Treaty of London. Austria-Hungary had disappeared, its place to be taken by smaller states who would enter the League of Nations with Italy; the principles of the Fourteen Points accepted as applicable

[1] The vital paragraph in the Balfour memorandum is as follows:
'It is for Italy, and not for the other signatories of the Pact of London, to say whether she will gain more in power, wealth and honour by strictly adhering to that part of the Pact of London which is in her favour, than by accepting modifications in it which would bring it into closer harmony with the principles which are governing the territorial decisions of the Allies in other parts of Europe. But so far as Fiume is concerned the position is different. Here, as we have already pointed out, the Pact of 1915 is against the Italian contention; and so also, it seems to us, are justice and policy. After the most prolonged and anxious reflection, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that it is either in the interests of Jugo-Slavia, in the interests of Italy herself, or in the interests of future peace — which is the concern of all the world — that this port should be severed from the territories to which economically, geographically and ethnologically it naturally belongs.'

to Germany should be applied also to the Peace as a whole. 'Every question associated with this settlement wears a new aspect — a new aspect given it by the very victory for right for which Italy has made the supreme sacrifice of blood and treasure.' He concluded with an appeal to the people of Italy: 'America is Italy's friend . . . she is linked in blood as well as in affection with the Italian people. . . . Interest is not now in question, but the rights of peoples, of states new and old, of liberated peoples and peoples whose rulers have never accounted them worthy of right; above all, the right of the world to peace and to such settlements of interest as shall make peace secure. These, and these only, are the principles for which America has fought . . . only upon these principles, she hopes and believes, will the people of Italy ask her to make peace.'

It was the form of the manifesto as much as its matter that angered the Italians. To the majority in Italy it seemed like an appeal by Wilson over the head of Orlando to the Italian people, and it permitted the inference that the Prime Minister did not represent his people. Orlando declared that he must return to Rome and say, 'Choose between Wilson and me.' In reality he could not have been altogether surprised by the publication of the manifesto, since it had been discussed by the Council of Four in his presence. It furnished him, none the less, with an opportunity for a spectacular departure, which he had been meditating before its publication, and provoked a tremendous popular sympathy for him in France and at home. At the same time he could make plain that the break was not definite; he would have technical experts at Paris during the period he was in consultation with the Italian parliament. If he had left Paris simply because the Four were not able to agree upon the Italian settlement, he would have been accused of pique and the onus for the break would have been on his shoulders; as it was, the responsibility was generally placed upon Wilson.

Notwithstanding the sensation caused by the publication of Wilson's memorandum and the departure of Orlando and Sonnino, the inner circle of the Peace Conference was not seriously disturbed. If the Italians stayed away and refused to sign the German Treaty, the French and the British would at least escape from the dilemma in which Italian insistence upon the Treaty of London would place them. After all, it would be the League of Nations and hence Wilsonian policy that would chiefly suffer from a permanent break between Italy and the other Powers. House was optimistic. He had confidence in the common sense of both Orlando and Sonnino, and did not believe that either would wish to separate Italy from the other Great Powers or from the very material benefits conferred upon the signatories of the German Treaty.

'The Italian crisis,' he wrote on April 24, 'has absorbed for the moment every thought. It looks to-night as if the situation might work itself clear again, although Orlando is going back to Italy. He leaves some of the Delegation here and perhaps is going to inform and consult his colleagues in Rome.

'*April* 26, 1919: Prince di Scordia, Orlando's Secretary, surprised me by calling to-day in order to express Orlando's regret that he left Paris without having an opportunity to bid me good-bye. Di Scordia said that Orlando still has a warm feeling of friendship.'

III

At the very moment when the Italian crisis was passing through its most acute stage, the Council of Four was compelled to meet what might have proved an even more dangerous crisis resulting from Japanese claims. It was not entirely due to Oriental strategy that the most insistent of their demands was pressed at the period when the Peace

Conference was threatened by disruption because of the Italian withdrawal. The Japanese had put forward their claims quietly but without relaxation from the beginning of the Conference. The summons to the German delegates brought them to a head; like the Italians the Japanese feared that the Treaty would be presented without definite satisfaction for their especial aspirations.

The Japanese claim to administer as mandatory the islands in the Pacific north of the Equator was apparently approved without great difficulty by President Wilson, who made, however, a reservation in the case of the island of Yap. He recognized that the Allies were bound by treaties, 'although,' as he said, 'perhaps he might be entitled to question whether Great Britain and Japan had been justified in handing round the islands in the Pacific. This, however, was a private opinion. . . .' [1] But Japanese demands for the insertion of an article in the Covenant of the League, recognizing the principle of racial equality, had been denied them.[2] They were the more insistent that the third item in their claims, succession to German rights in Shantung, should be approved. The Japanese were willing to hand back the Shantung Peninsula in full sovereignty to China, retaining only the economic privileges granted to Germany, but they were adamant in demanding that Germany's renunciation be in favor of Japan in the first place. It was clearly a question of prestige and one upon which Japan would not yield. On April 24, Orlando left for Rome and the same day the Japanese presented a request for 'a definite settlement of this question . . . with the least possible delay.' Two days

[1] Council of Four, April 22.

[2] This failure aroused warm feeling in Japan, where it was attributed to the unfriendly influence of President Wilson, who was charged by the Osaki *Mainichi* with having a 'female demon within him.' The Japanese delegates at Paris recognized that the failure resulted from the protests of the British Dominion Premiers; the British were therefore the more anxious to satisfy Japan's Shantung claims.

before, Viscount Chinda had told the Four that unless their claim was satisfied the Japanese would not be allowed to sign the Treaty.

Wilson was evidently certain that they were not bluffing, and House agreed with him. The latter had seen much of the Japanese, who during the course of the debates on the Covenant had come regularly to his rooms in the Crillon. He was fully aware of the aid they had brought to Wilson during these debates, and he appreciated the fact that, at the moment of disappointment consequent upon the failure to insert their own amendment to the Covenant, they had made no opposition to the President's amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. He was convinced that following the withdrawal of Italy, the refusal of Japan to sign the Treaty must ruin the prestige of the Conference if it did not break it up, and would place an intolerable handicap upon the League. After compromising with the French it would be impossible, he felt, to hold out against the Japanese, whose promise of later restitution to China he trusted implicity. Two days after the departure of Orlando, Wilson realized that a decision must be reached.

'*April* 26, 1919: The President came to the Crillon at two o'clock,' wrote House, 'for a meeting of the Commissioners. He wanted our opinion as to what action had best be taken in the differences between Japan and China. Both he and Lansing lean toward China, while in this instance my sympathies are about evenly divided, with a feeling that it would be a mistake to take such action against Japan as might lead to her withdrawal from the Conference. I argued the matter at some length with the President.

'*April* 28, 1919: [Following the Plenary Session of the Peace Conference.] Lloyd George afterward took me aside and asked if I would not get the President in a more amenable frame of mind. He thought the President was unfair to

Japan and so does Balfour. . . . The concession the Germans obtained from China in the first place, and which the Japanese have taken over as a part of their spoils of war, is bad enough; but it is no worse than the doubtful transactions that have gone on among the Allies themselves and, indeed, that are going on now. They are dividing up the Turkish Empire just as the Japanese are trying to secure a sphere of influence in China, but with this difference: The Allies intend to hold what they take in Asia Minor, while the Japanese have promised to return the concessions to China provided the Allies permit Japan to save her face by first taking them over.'

On the previous day, April 27, Mr. Balfour had drafted and presented to the Three a memorandum of his conversations with the Japanese, in which the latter promised definitely to return Shantung to the Chinese; on April 28, he informed Baron Makino that in all essential aspects the Council of Three were ready to approve the Japanese claim.

Balfour Memorandum

'The result of my conversations with the Japanese may, I think, be summarized somewhat as follows:

'In the first place, the Japanese strenuously deny either that they intended to modify in their own favour the conditions which the Germans had imposed upon the Chinese in connection with the Shantung Peninsula, or that, in fact, their treaties with China would have had that effect.

'They say, on the contrary, that they propose surrendering all military control over the Peninsula, including the 50-kilometre zone around Kiaochow within which German troops were allowed but not Chinese, and all interference with the civil administration of the territory. Their inten-

tion is fully to restore Chinese sovereignty within the leased territory. . . .' [1]

After conference with the Three, Balfour wrote to Makino a letter of which the essential passage runs as follows:

Mr. Balfour to Baron Makino

April 28, 1919

DEAR BARON MAKINO:

. . . I went over to President Wilson's house, and again explained that you thought it due to you to have the Shantung question settled one way or the other before the discussion of the League of Nations came on this afternoon at the Plenary Conference. It was unfortunately then much too late to ask you to discuss the matter with your colleagues from America, France, and England. But after hearing what I had to say in supplement of the paper which I read to you yesterday, I was authorized to tell you that if — which they did not doubt — the view which I represented to them as being yours was held by you, they were quite satisfied as regards the permanent arrangements come to between Japan and China on the question of Shantung. The essence of these arrangements, as I repeated to them, is that after German rights have been ceded to Japan, Japan will hand back to China the whole of the leased territory in complete sovereignty; that the only rights which Japan will retain are the economic rights enumerated in my memorandum; [2] and that

[1] The complete memorandum, as well as Balfour's letter to Makino, is printed in *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 311 ff.

[2] Those rights as enumerated by Balfour were as follows:

1. A right to claim a concession at Tsingtau, which, however, does not exclude, and was not intended to exclude, the right also for other countries to organize an international concession, if that is desired.

2. The German rights in the railways already built, and the mines associated with them. The railways are built on land which is in full Chinese sovereignty, and subject to Chinese law.

3. Concessions granted to the Germans for building two other rail-

Japan proposes to take every precaution to prevent undue discrimination in matters of railway rates, or port and harbour dues, or other cognate matters between nation and nation; in fact, that the policy of the open door should be fully carried out in the spirit as in the letter. . . .'

Yours, &c,

A. J. B.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *April* 29, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Both George and Balfour spoke to me yesterday about the Japanese settlement. They hoped you would accept the assurance which Makino gave Balfour and of which he has made a record.

My feeling is that while it is all bad, it is no worse than the things we are doing in many of the settlements in which the Western Powers are interested. I feel too that we had best clean up a lot of old rubbish with the least friction, and let the League of Nations and the new era do the rest.

England, France, and Japan ought to get out of China, and perhaps they will later if enough pressure is brought through public opinion as expressed in the League of Nations.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson evidently felt, as did House, that to hold out against the Japanese would not help China and might result in the failure of the League. He still fought for a clear agreement that the Japanese would not use the economic conces-

ways. These railways are to be built with Japanese capital, and the Japanese capitalists are at this moment negotiating with the Chinese Government as to the terms on which the necessary money will be provided. The Chinese Government will be able to secure the same position in regard to these railways as it has over other railways constructed by foreign capital.

sions to retain virtual control of Shantung, but he finally acceded to their demand that the renunciation of German rights in the Treaty should be made to Japan. 'The only hope,' he said to Mr. Baker, 'was to keep the world together, get the League of Nations with Japan in it and then try to secure justice for the Chinese not only as regarding Japan but England, France, Russia, all of whom had concessions in China.' [1] On the morning of April 30, the Japanese made formal declaration of their intention to hand Shantung back to China.[2]

IV

The atmosphere of suspense and uncertainty which hung over the Peace Conference was not entirely removed by the Shantung settlement. The Belgians were discouraged by the delay of the Council to approve definitely their claim to priority in reparations, and complained, not unnaturally, at their exclusion from the inner council during the discussions on the German Treaty in which they were vitally interested. The Council was also unsympathetic towards their request for a rectification of the Belgian-Dutch frontier, which would involve cession of territory by Holland, a neutral power. During the first week of May the Belgians discussed seriously a withdrawal from the Conference.

The attitude of the Italians also left the Conference in something of a quandary. The Council did not know

[1] Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 266.

[2] The Japanese declaration made to the Council of Three was as follows:

'The policy of Japan is to hand back the Shantung Peninsula in full sovereignty to China retaining only the economic privileges granted to Germany and the right to establish a settlement under the usual conditions at Tsingtau.

'The owners of the railway will use special Police only to ensure security for traffic. They will be used for no other purpose.

'The Police Force will be composed of Chinese and such Japanese instructors as the Directors of the Railway may select [and] will be appointed by the Chinese Government.'

whether, in presenting the Treaty to the Germans, the name of Italy should be included or not. There was talk of sending them an ultimatum which would give them forty-eight hours to return to Paris or to face the consequences of exclusion from the German Treaty. The attitude of the Three was rather one of indifference, too much so, as Colonel House thought. The disadvantages of not having the Italians sign the Treaty were apparent, but the Council of Three feared that if they returned they would insist upon the Treaty of London, to which Clemenceau and Lloyd George regarded themselves as bound, and thereby bring about an impossible situation between France and Great Britain on the one side and the United States on the other.

Uncertainty was ended by the decision of the Italians to return without conditions and participate in the ceremony of handing the Treaty to the Germans. At the same time the Belgians, securing a guarantee of a practical priority in reparations, agreed, although reluctantly, to sign. On May 6, a Plenary Session was held at the Foreign Office, at which Tardieu read an abstract of the Treaty, which was at this time unknown to the majority of the delegates. Protests were raised, of which the most stirring was that of Marshal Foch who inveighed against the failure to assure France security against Germany.[1] The protests were recorded, but the Treaty was approved. The following day the Conference met at Versailles, where the German delegates, led by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, received the bulky document.

'It is strange,' wrote House, 'that the presentation of the Treaty to the Germans should occur on the anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. This was not by design, but by chance, for we hoped to present it last week and again on Monday or Tuesday of this week.

[1] Other protests were made for various reasons by the Portuguese, the Chinese, and the Belgians.

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AFTER PRESENTING THE TREATY TO THE GERMANS AT VERSAILLES
President Wilson, Colonel House, General Bliss, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. White, and others

'I started for Versailles shortly after two o'clock. We drove very rapidly and made what is usually a forty to forty-five minute trip in a half-hour. Clemenceau and a few others were already there. Balfour soon followed with the other members of the British Delegation. Orlando and Sonnino came in shortly after. . . .

'After we were seated, the Germans were notified and were brought in by Colonel Henry. We all arose when they entered, an action I was glad to see. Clemenceau made a speech of a few minutes. He did it in his usual composed though energetic fashion. . . . Much to our surprise, Brockdorff-Rantzau began to read a long reply. Clemenceau stood when he delivered his address, but Rantzau remained seated. White and I wondered whether it was not because he was too nervous to stand steadily upon his feet. When White went last Thursday to see their credentials, he said he never saw a greater exhibition of nervousness in a diplomat; that his knees literally knocked together, and White thought that he might at any moment faint.

'The speech he made in reply to Clemenceau's was an able one, but it seemed to me out of place. If I had been in his position I should have said: "Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Congress: War is a great gamble; we have lost and are willing to submit to any reasonable terms."

'After Brockdorff-Rantzau had delivered his speech, Clemenceau asked if there was anything else to say: Rantzau replied in the negative, and Clemenceau then declared the Congress adjourned. The Germans went out in advance, and the balance broke up into groups to discuss the occasion together. I congratulated both Lloyd George and Clemenceau, particularly Clemenceau, and told him that it was a great hour not only for France but for him. He showed some emotion. . . .'

The restraint of House's reference to Brockdorff-Rantzau

was not generally echoed by the delegates or the press, who regarded as a studied insult the fact that the German remained seated. Nor did they enjoy the vigor of his denunciation of the clause in the Treaty according to which Germany must admit her responsibility for the war.

'It is demanded of us,' said Brockdorff-Rantzau, 'that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the war. Such a confession in my mouth will be a lie. We are far from declining any responsibility that this great war of the world has come to pass. But we deny that Germany and its people were alone guilty.'

'Count Brockdorff-Rantzau was speaking with extreme bitterness of tone,' wrote Mr. C. T. Thompson, 'and his phrase "it would be a lie" was fairly hissed. He sat stolidly all the time, looking straight ahead through his large horn-rimmed spectacles. President Wilson leaned forward on the desk before him and gazed intently at Rantzau as he spoke.'[1]

[1] Thompson, *The Peace Conference Day by Day*, 362.

CHAPTER XIII

VERSAILLES

Empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance. To create new boundaries is always to create new troubles. . . . I should have preferred a different peace, I doubt whether it could have been made.

Colonel House's Diary, June 29, 1919

I

With the delivery of the Treaty to the Germans on May 7, opportunity was given to the Peace Conference to concentrate upon the unfinished aspects of the Austrian and Hungarian Treaties. Public interest, however, was centered upon whether the Germans would sign. The first word from Germany was not encouraging and it foreshadowed the attitude which all Germany soon assumed towards President Wilson.

'The unbelievable has happened,' declared the President of the National Assembly at Weimar. 'The enemy presents us a treaty surpassing the most pessimistic forecasts. It means the annihilation of the German people. It is incomprehensible that a man who had promised the world a peace of justice, upon which a society of nations would be founded, has been able to assist in framing this project dictated by hate.'

On May 10, the first German notes of protest were delivered, and thereafter for some three weeks the written negotiations continued between Germany and the Allies. During this period Colonel House busied himself particularly with work on the organization of the League, which was now his main interest, and with the renewed attempts to discover a compromise solution of the Adriatic problem. As always

during the Conference, his office was filled with petitioners of one sort or another, who counted upon his influence with the President; long hours were filled in discussion of the German objections to the Treaty and of what changes ought to be made. Selections from his papers illustrate House's activities during this final phase of the Conference.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *April* 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am sending you some letters for your signature which I hope you will approve.

Cecil, Drummond, and I think that it is necessary to call this League of Nations Organization Committee together as soon as possible. There are many things that Drummond says he must know immediately, such as financial arrangements, etc.

Please return the letters to me here for proper distribution. Some of them will have to be delivered with explanations.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The President to Mr. Lloyd George [1]

PARIS, *April* 30, 1919

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

The Plenary Conference on the 27th instant under the presidency of M. Clemenceau decided that a Committee of nine should be appointed to prepare plans for the organization of the League of Nations and for other purposes. I am to request that your Government, as one of the Powers designated to be represented on the Committee, will be good enough to nominate a member of the Committee. The first

[1] Identical letters were sent to Pessoa (Brazil), Hymans (Belgium), Clemenceau (France), Venizelos (Greece), Bonin (Italy), Saionji (Japan), Quinones de Leon (Spain).

meeting of the Committee will be held at the Hôtel Crillon on Monday, the fifth of May, at four o'clock.

I am, my dear Prime Minister

Faithfully yours

WOODROW WILSON

'*May* 5, 1919: The meeting of the Organization Committee of the League of Nations,' wrote House, 'was held in the same room of my apartment where the Covenant was written. It lasted only eight minutes. I called the meeting to order, asked Pichon to take the chair, Drummond to act as Secretary, and moved the attached resolutions, which were adopted without argument and without change, with the slight explanations noted in Article 2 and Article 4. One of my secretaries came out of the meeting and was asked how matters were going. His reply was, "It is finished and they have already gone." There were no speeches, no arguments, and nothing done to retard business.

'We did not have the correspondents in at the League of Nations meeting as I had planned, for the reason that Miller and Gordon thought this meeting and subsequent meetings prior to the ratification of the Treaty should not be emphasized, lest our Senate feel that we were disregarding them and perhaps putting the League into being with or without their consent.'

Resolutions

1. That the Acting Secretary General be instructed to prepare plans of organization of the League and submit them to the Committee.

2. That a credit of £100,000 shall be opened immediately on the joint and several guarantee of such of the States represented on the Committee, subject to any approval necessary by law.

2 (b). That the Acting Secretary General or such persons

as he may designate in writing shall be entitled to draw on this credit.

3. That the Acting Secretary General be authorized to engage a temporary staff and offices and incur such other expenditures as he considers necessary for carrying out the instructions of the Committee.

4. That the Acting Secretary General's salary shall be at the rate of £4000 a year with an allowance for *frais de représentation* of £6000 a year. A house shall be provided for the Secretary General at the permanent Seat of the League.

5. That the meeting be adjourned *sine die*, the Acting Secretary General being instructed to call the next meeting at such time and place as he shall think most suitable, having regard to the business to be done and the convenience of the members of the Committee.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *May* 8, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Sonnino came to see me this afternoon to ask that I say to you that he and Orlando were exceedingly sorry because of the intemperate things that had been said in Italy both in public speeches and in the press. He said they did their best to curb it and that they would like you to know that they in no way sympathized with it. He spoke in a very conciliatory tone and hoped that a way out would be found. He had nothing to suggest.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*May* 12, 1919: To-day has been busy. It might well be called Italian Day. Sonnino and di Cellere [1] lunched with us, Orlando called immediately after lunch, and the President

[1] Italian Ambassador to the United States.

arrived around six o'clock to discuss the Italian question. . . . Sonnino had just left when Orlando arrived. . . . We exchanged terms of friendship and admiration. He asked if he might come to-morrow at 9.30 for a real conference. I am looking forward to seeing him, always hoping that we may strike a successful formula.

'I have asked David Miller to see di Cellere to-night. . . .

'The President's visit to the Crillon was wholly devoted to Italy. Henry White was also present and sustained me. . . . The solution proposed was the placing of Fiume and Dalmatia wholly under the League of Nations for such a period as was deemed necessary to allow good sense and calm judgment to prevail. . . . I told him of Orlando's visit to-day and of his proposed visit to-morrow, in which he was deeply interested.

'*May* 13, 1919: Orlando was my most important caller. He arrived at 9.30 and remained until 10. We discussed the Adriatic question from every angle. I advised that the disputed territory be turned over to the League of Nations for a period until calmer judgment prevailed. It was decided that David Miller go to his apartment and that they together discuss the legal means by which a settlement could be brought about through the League of Nations or otherwise. Orlando named 11.30 for the appointment with Miller.

'Miller was with him for an hour and a half. They did not reach an agreement, but made some progress. They are to meet again to-morrow at nine. I advised the President of what we were doing and he expressed alarm for fear Orlando would take what I was saying as a direct offer from him, because of our close relations. I assured him that Orlando understood just how matters were. How could a settlement ever be reached if we did not discuss it in some such way?'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *May* 14, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This morning, in a conversation with David Miller, Signor Orlando has suggested the possibility of an agreement being reached between Italy and the Jugo-Slavs on the whole Adriatic question, including Fiume.

The two questions which Orlando asks are these: First, would the President approve an agreement freely reached between the Italian and Jugo-Slav Governments, assuming that they reached a solution different from that which he would lay down; second, if the President's answer to the first question is favorable, would the President be willing that conversations between the Italian and Jugo-Slav Governments be carried on through the friendly medium of a representative of the American Government.

Will you please advise me? [1]

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*May* 15, 1919: The better part of to-day, as also previous days, has been taken up with the Adriatic question. Trumbitch [2] was with me a large part of the morning. Thomas Nelson Page followed, and Orlando came in the afternoon. . . .

'There is no need to go into the arguments used by me or by them, but the situation is different from what it formerly was. The Italians are now talking sense. . . .

'*May* 16, 1919: It has been the Adriatic settlement again to-day.[3] Trumbitch came in the morning and it was with

[1] President Wilson returned this letter, underlining the words 'freely reached' and with a pencil endorsement, 'Yes to both questions.'

[2] Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Jugo-Slavs.

[3] Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 333:

'Colonel House told me that Orlando would be ready to make an

difficulty I obtained his consent to a discussion with the Italians, with me acting as intermediary. This was finally accomplished and I had Trumbitch in the large reception room, Orlando and Count di Cellere in the salon, with my study between. Miller and Beer I placed with the Italians, and Frazier and Johnson with Trumbitch. . . .

'We got them so nearly to an agreement that it was a matter of deep regret that we could not bring them all the way.

'The Italians agreed that Fiume should be a free city. They agreed to give the Jugo-Slavs all of Dalmatia if certain islands could be Italian and if the cities of Zara and Sebenico might become free cities under Italian sovereignty.

agreement with the Southern Slavs along the whole line within twenty-four hours and to accept him as intermediary provided that Trumbitch would also accept. House therefore wished me to secure from Trumbitch a written declaration that the Southern Slav delegation would be ready to negotiate a settlement with the Italians and to accept House as intermediary.

'When I made this suggestion to Trumbitch I found him and the other Yugoslavs in a recalcitrant mood. The Austrian delegation had been summoned to Saint-Germain for the negotiation of peace, and a marked disposition to be very tender towards Austria had become noticeable among the "Big Three." The Southern Slavs began to fear that, while the Italians were driving a hard bargain with them in the Adriatic, the other Allies would support the Austrians in driving a hard bargain with them in the delimitation of the Slovene frontier in Carinthia. Consequently, Trumbitch declined to make offhand the declaration which House wanted and insisted that, even should he be forced on the morrow to negotiate with the Italians, he must be assured of fair terms from the Allies in Carinthia. Colonel House thought that there was some justification for this demand and asked me to hammer out that night a compromise line between the Austrian and the Southern Slav claims in Carinthia. Next day, House took matters into his own hands and summoned Orlando and Trumbitch to the Hôtel Crillon where, for four hours, a conference went on in watertight compartments. Trumbitch, tied down by definite instructions from his delegation, sat in one room; Orlando and an Italian diplomatist sat in another, while Colonel House, Frazier, and Major Douglas Johnson acted as intermediaries between them. The result was a total deadlock, although Orlando pressed for a final solution before midnight with an insistence which the Americans could not understand. I discovered, however, that Orlando was fearful lest his rival, Signor Nitti, should turn Italian public opinion against him, and wished to save himself by announcing an Adriatic settlement.'

'The Jugo-Slavs practically agreed that Italy should receive (1) the Sexten Valley, (2) Tarvis District. It was agreed by both that (1) Fiume, including Susak, was to be an independent city and a free port under the protection of the League of Nations; (2) Dalmatia to be neutralized under Jugo-Slav sovereignty; (3) Pago to go to the mainland.

'The Jugo-Slavs agreed that Lussin and Pelagosa should go to Italy, but they dissented as to Lissa, although they said they would accept it if we insisted.

'The Italians wanted the eastern part of Istria to be included in their boundaries. To this the Jugo-Slavs objected. I think, however, we could have reached a compromise upon this.[1] The Italians wanted Zara and Sebenico to be free cities under Italian sovereignty. The Jugo-Slavs would not agree. Italy wanted the remaining islands within the line of the Treaty of London. To this also the Jugo-Slavs objected. . . .

'We started the conference a little after five o'clock and did not break up until nine at night. The Italians regarded it as a last effort to come to a direct agreement, but they are returning here to-morrow at 9.30 to see whether they cannot reach an understanding with me.

'I saw the President in the afternoon and told him what I was doing in the matter of the Adriatic settlement. He thanked me, but showed no inclination to be conciliatory to the Italians.

'General Smuts called in the morning to tell me that he and Botha had almost decided not to sign the Treaty if the Entente refused to make such changes in it as the Germans suggested, and which the liberal world would approve.[2]

[1] As it turned out, this proved to be the unsurmountable barrier, upon which the Jugo-Slavs refused to yield until the direct negotiations that culminated in the Treaty of Rapallo.

[2] Smuts wrote to both Lloyd George and Wilson to this effect. He finally signed the Treaty, but issued a public statement in which he insisted upon continuous revision of the Treaty in a liberal sense under the ægis of the League of Nations.

He thought the Germans would win a decided diplomatic victory by pointing out the many injustices which the Treaty contained. He also thought in the event the Entente refused these just demands, and should then undertake to blockade Germany and starve her people into submission, it would cause world-wide revolution. We agreed that while public opinion did sustain the Entente in its blockade of Germany when they were fighting for their lives, it would not sustain them when they were starving women and children for the purpose of trying to force the signing of a treaty.

'I sincerely trust that this ordeal will not have to be faced. I shall not be in favor of starving the people of Germany. At one time I thought perhaps this would be the only way out in the event Germany did not sign, but at that stage I did not know the real conditions in Germany and how much suffering there was. I have never been in favor of the blockade, and tried my best at the beginning, before we entered the war, to have some understanding reached by which food could go into Germany through neutral ports without question. . . .

'The Secretary of State for India, E. S. Montagu, was another caller. He came to point out the danger of breaking up the Turkish Empire. He said the entire Mohammedan population of India and the East was in a highly nervous state in regard to it, and that he personally believed if this was done it would eventually lead to Great Britain having to abandon her Asiatic possessions. . . .

'Pichon was my first caller this morning. He wished to know whether we would agree to the publication of those parts of the Treaty which had already been published in Germany and which are now coming into France in German papers. The President at first agreed. Later he thought it was best not to do so while Lloyd George was absent. . . . The President himself is not in favor of any publication. . . .

'I urged the contrary policy, and that the entire Treaty should be given to the public.

'*May* 17, 1919: Orlando and di Cellere were my first visitors. We worked on the Adriatic problem from half-past nine o'clock until eleven, but further than "whittling" down the Italian claims, arrived at no definite results. I discussed the subject with the President before they came, but he was inflexible in his determination to yield nothing.

'The Italians feel they have been mistreated. Self-determination is to be applied, according to them, only when the Italians desire something. When anything is to be given, however, to France, England, Poland, or other states, then it is overlooked. They are beginning to be bitter not only against us, but against France and England.'

II

'*May* 20, 1919: Dr. King came to-day about the Syrian Commission, and I told the President it was something of a scandal that this commission had not already gone to Syria as promised the Arabs. The honor of Great Britain, France, and the United States was at stake, and I hoped he would insist that the commission leave at once. The President assured me that he had done everything he could in the direction indicated. I then suggested that he set Monday as the time when our commission would start, regardless of the French and English. He adopted the suggestion and said he would tell Clemenceau and Lloyd George to-morrow.

'I took occasion to express the hope that the President would not agree to blockade Germany in the event the Germans refused to sign the Treaty. I spoke with considerable feeling and said that the world, outside of France and perhaps a part of England, would not tolerate such a procedure for the purpose of enforcing a treaty. The President was sympathetic to this view.

'*May* 21, 1919: General Pershing was in and remained for

a half-hour. We discussed the return of our troops to America. Three hundred and twelve thousand will be sent this month. The record last month was 300,000. At this rate all our troops will be in the United States by August 15. Pershing is not enthusiastic over any of our troops remaining for occupation purposes.

'*May* 22, 1919: Makino and Chinda came to ask advice about sitting in at the Council of Four. They say it is becoming embarrassing to inform their Government about the happenings of the Conference through newspaper reports. They never know what is going on until they see it printed, and that of course is merely a small part of the proceedings. I suggested that they address a letter to Clemenceau, stating that since Japan was expected to guarantee the Treaty and its provisions, they would expect from now to sit in the Council of Four; I also suggested that they state their embarrassment at having to give their Government information concerning the Conference which they had gained from newspapers. . . . Makino and Chinda almost always come together.[1]

'Wellington Koo also wished advice. His trouble was that his people are demanding that their delegates at Paris should not sign the Peace Treaty because of the Shantung decision. He knew this would embarrass the other signatories of the Treaty and he wished counsel about what to do. They have been considering signing with a reservation, and he wondered if that could be done without offence. I advised him to see the President and to say to him that he had noticed in the American Press that Mr. Elihu Root had advised the American Commissioners when they signed the Treaty to make a reservation in regard to the Monroe Doctrine, and that the Chinese delegates had decided to accept the same kind of advice as to themselves; that they therefore intended to

[1] The Japanese were shortly invited to sit with the representatives of the other Principal Powers.

sign the Treaty with a reservation because of the Shantung decision.[1]

'*May* 24, 1919: I began to sit this morning for a portrait Sir William Orpen is painting for the British Government. . . . Yesterday I sat for a Frenchman who is painting a picture of the public reception given the President at the Hôtel de Ville for the Municipality of Paris; strangely enough, for I was not present at this reception and have not been to any such functions. They evidently thought I should have been there and intend putting me in the picture whether or no.

'Alexander Kerensky came by appointment in the afternoon to tell again of Russia. Felix Frankfurter called to talk of the Jews in Palestine.

'*May* 25, 1919: Tardieu was my most interesting caller. He came from Clemenceau to tell me that Orlando had just been to the War Office to notify him that the Italians intended at to-morrow's meeting to demand from the French and British the Treaty of London. Tardieu was in a great state of mind and wished me to communicate with the President, which I did over the private telephone. I had just left the President at the "Paris White House," but at that time neither of us knew of this latest *dénouement* in the Adriatic situation.

'The President was disturbed, but not "panicky." He thought a way out would be found.

'*May* 28, 1919: Tardieu was again my most important caller. He was up last night until one o'clock with the Italians. He came at 9.30 to tell how far they had gotten in their discussion. I got in touch with the President over the telephone and afterward went up to see him. Lloyd George was already there. After some discussion, George and I went over to his apartment in rue Nitot and had a conference with Orlando. We then went back to the President. By that

[1] The Chinese, upon express instructions, finally refused to sign the German Treaty.

time Clemenceau was with the President, and the four of us conferred over Italian matters and the Austrian Treaty.

'Clemenceau did not like the Austrians calling themselves "The German Austrian Republic." Lloyd George insisted that this was the proper designation. The President sustained him. I took Clemenceau's part and suggested that they be advised to use the name "The New Austrian Republic." This was tentatively accepted. It was agreed, however, that Jules Cambon should see the Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs and ask them whether there was any objection to this procedure.

'We have the Adriatic question whittled down to the vanishing point. The President . . . wishes to leave the matter to the Jugo-Slavs. Both George and I objected to this and thought the Jugo-Slavs should be told that we consider the proposal a fair one and recommend it to them for acceptance. We explained to the President that there were several nations concerned in the Jugo-Slav side of the controversy, and that it was impossible for them to accept any settlement that was not recommended by the Allies. He finally yielded.

'*May* 30, 1919: The Archbishop of Carinthia with several delegates from that country came to expound the cause of the Slovenes. They were delighted to have the news that their wishes have been met. I told them that their demands had exceeded their prudence, with the result that more territory had been allotted to them than they could probably hold by a plebiscite. They did not deny this.[1]

'Harris, of the London *Daily News*, was in. So also was Pessoa of Brazil. He came for advice regarding an offer which France had made for the thirty German ships leased to her by Brazil. I advised accepting the offer, because I believed the price of tonnage now was greater than it would

[1] The plebiscite later held in the Klagenfurt Basin gave the territory to Austria.

be within another year, and that the type of ships would improve.

'I did not go to the Suresnes Cemetery to hear the President. The speech was a masterpiece of its kind. I have written the President what I thought of it. I am quite sincere in believing that the President will rank with the great orators of all time.

'*May* 31, 1919: I did not go to the Plenary Conference. I thoroughly disapprove of the manner in which they are conducted. The treaties are made practically behind closed doors, and the small countries directly concerned in them know practically nothing of the conditions until they are read at these Plenary Sessions. . . .

'In my opinion, the procedure followed should be the same as that adopted in the framing of the Armistice. Clemenceau, George, Orlando, and I met practically every morning alone and discussed what was to be presented to the full session at Versailles in the afternoon. If this plan had been followed with the Treaties, the Council of Four could have met in the same way to outline the problems and reach conclusions, and they could have been presented the same day or the next to the Plenary Conference. If this had been done, all the delegates would have had a hand in the making of the Treaties and there would have been no heartburnings or recriminations as now. These Plenary Sessions should have been in the open and the peoples of all countries could have followed the proceedings day by day. I can see the inconvenience of such procedure, and yet the good outweighs it all.

'The Germans are giving us an example of open diplomacy. They print the Treaty as soon as it is given them, and we are getting in Paris the German edition. It is being sold in Germany and Holland and near-by countries at a ridiculously low price, something like fifty cents a copy. Nevertheless, be it remembered, the United States Senate has never seen the Treaty as a whole.

'We had a conference with the Jugo-Slavs. They brought a refusal to our proposals of yesterday. They called their reply "a concession," but as far as any of us could see, it meant that within three years the whole of the Dalmatian Coast, Istria, and the islands, would go to Jugo-Slavia. They had worked out a careful plan by which after three years and a plebiscite it would be certain to go to them. They did not leave a single loophole for the Italians to win. When I told the President this, he declared they were right. . . .'

III

The failure of the Italian-Jugo-Slav negotiations was overshadowed by the question as to whether the German Treaty should be changed in view of the objections raised by the German delegates and, if so, to what extent. The German protests crystallized the sentiments of a number of the more liberal delegates that the Treaty was unfair; some of the experts actually resigned. They also convinced Lloyd George that there was serious danger of the Germans refusing to sign the Treaty and leaving the Allies face to face with a disorganized Europe. House found the British Prime Minister anxious to reconsider many points, especially as regards the period of occupation of the Rhine, the eastern frontier of Germany, and the admission of Germany into the League. He was supported by members of the British Delegation, notably General Smuts, who reiterated his disinclination to signing the Treaty as it had been drafted. In a conversation with Sir William Wiseman, Mr. Lloyd George stated clearly that the time had come to decide whether to have a 'hell-peace' or a 'heaven-peace.'

But Clemenceau was adamant. When he heard the suggestion of reducing the period of fifteen years' occupation, he declared he would not make it fourteen years, three hundred and sixty-four days. Nor would he consider the immediate admission of Germany into the League. Again he pointed

out that every concession suggested by Lloyd George was at the expense of France.

Colonel House was naturally sympathetic with all efforts to liberalize the Peace terms and had frequently expressed his dissatisfaction at many of the compromises which it had been necessary to make. He especially disliked the economic aspects of the Treaty. But House feared that if a wholesale revision of the Treaty were begun, complete agreement between the Powers at Paris could never again be achieved.

'*May* 30, 1919: Clemenceau declared,' wrote House after a talk with him, 'that he intended to stand firm against any substantial reduction in the terms of the Treaty, no matter what the consequences. In my opinion, if he does this he will win. I am not sure that his policy is best. The Treaty is not a good one, it is too severe. . . . However, the time to have the Treaty right was when it was being formed and not now. It is a question if one commenced to unravel what has already been done, whether it could be stopped. It is also a question as to the effect upon the Germans. We desired from the beginning a fair peace, and one well within the Fourteen Points, and one which could stand the scrutiny of the neutral world and of all time. It is not such a peace, but since the Treaty has been written, I question whether it would be well to seriously modify it.'

At a meeting of the American Commissioners held on June 3, with the entire American Delegation, President Wilson expressed substantially the same views. The American experts voiced their dissatisfaction with the clauses which left the total of Reparations undecided, with the long period of occupation of German territory by French armies, and with the assignment of German coal districts in Silesia to Poland. It was agreed that the experts should urge changes if the other Powers could be persuaded to accept

them; but it was also the sense of the meeting that to press for anything that might threaten the unanimity of the Allied Powers would be unwise and dangerous. The President was firm in his insistence that he would not be frightened into concessions by the German threat of a refusal to sign the Treaty.

'The great problem of the moment,' Wilson said, 'is the problem of agreement, because the most fatal thing that could happen, I should say, in the world, would be that sharp lines of division should be drawn among the Allied and Associated Powers. They ought to be held together, if it can reasonably be done, and that makes a problem like the problem of occupation look almost insoluble, because the British are at one extreme, and the French refusal to move is at the opposite extreme. . . .

'What is necessary is to get out of this atmosphere of war, get out of the present exaggerated feelings and exaggerated appearances, and I believe that if we can once get out of them into the calmer airs it would be easier to come to satisfactory solutions. . . .

'I don't want to seem to be unreasonable, but my feeling is this: that we ought not, with the object of getting it signed, make changes in the Treaty, if we think that it embodies what we were contending for; that the time to consider all these questions was when we were writing the Treaty, and it makes me a little tired for people to come and say now that they are afraid the Germans won't sign, and their fear is based upon things that they insisted upon at the time of the writing of the Treaty. . . .

'And that is the thing that happened. These people that overrode our judgment and wrote things into the Treaty that are now the stumbling-blocks, are falling over themselves to remove these stumbling-blocks. Now, if they ought not to have been there I say, remove them, but I say

do not remove them merely for the fact of having the Treaty signed. . . .

'Though we did not keep them from putting irrational things in the Treaty, we got very serious modifications out of them. If we had written the Treaty the way they wanted it, the Germans would have gone home the minute they read it.

'Well, the Lord be with us.' [1]

The French remained firm in their stand against any important change in the settlement and pointed out that during the construction of the Treaty, German arguments had always been known and considered. They refused any shortening in the period of occupation; and the British, when it came to a final issue, would not agree to a definite sum of Reparations being set forth in the Treaty.

M. André Tardieu to Colonel House

PARIS, *June* 10, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Very grave mistakes have been made during the past week: there is only just time to repair them.

For more than five months the heads of Governments and their experts have studied the terms of the Peace to be imposed on Germany. They have reached an agreement and they have communicated to the Germans a text which, if it does not yet bind Count Brockdorff — in any case unquestionably binds the Allies.

Could the Allies suppose that this text would be satisfactory to Germany? Of course not. However, they adopted it. Germany protests, as it was certain she would. Immediately a modification of the text is undertaken. I say this is a confession of weakness and a confession of lack of seri-

[1] Stenographic report of meeting of June 3.

ousness, for which all the Allied Governments will pay dearly in terms of public opinion! Is it an impossible Treaty? Is it an unjust Treaty? Count Brockdorff believes it is. If we change it, we admit that we think as he does. What a condemnation of the work we have done during the past sixteen weeks!

Mr. Lloyd George has said, 'But they will not sign and we shall have a thousand difficulties.' It is the argument we heard so often during the war — after the battle of the Marne, after Verdun, after the German offensive in the spring of 1918, people said in all of our countries, 'Let us make peace to avoid difficulties.' We did not listen to them and we did well. We went on with the war and we won it. Shall we have less heart for peace than we had for war?

I add that these public discussions between Allies over a Treaty drawn up between Allies weaken us more every day in the eyes of an adversary who respects only firmness (see the reports from Versailles which arrived to-day).

Thus on the general principle my opinion is this: a week ago, we ought to have answered the Germans, 'We will change nothing.' If we had only made this answer, the Treaty would be signed to-day. We did not do it. What ought we to do now?

As regards the special principles about which amendments are being considered, what is the position?

Reparations? The British who made the first suggestion of amendment are with us to-day against any modification and it is your delegation which proposes (along with other changes which France cannot possibly accept) a total figure of 125 thousand million francs, which would barely cover as far as France is concerned the two-thirds of the specific damages, reparation for which is imposed on Germany by the text of May 7. We will not accept it.

League of Nations? We have laid down after four months

of study the conditions in which Germany may enter the League. Are we going to change them? Are we going to confess that our decision falls before the observations of Count Brockdorff? How after that could we defend the Treaty before our respective Parliaments?

All these vacillations, which were repeated in the matters of the Sarre and of the left bank of the Rhine, were the results of the initial mistake. But let me add another word.

No one has the right to ask France to accept such terms. France has an unique experience of Germany. No one has suffered as she has. It is useless to think of persuading France to accept such close cohabitation with Germany in the near future in violation of the text of the Covenant, first of all because France will not accept it and then because it is not just.

When the question arose of Japan's status in the League of Nations, every one gave way to the American objections.[1] When dealing with Germany, it is France that must be heard.

But above all I would not have the moral position of the Allies sacrificed to the Brockdorff memorandum. I would not have them subjected to the unjustifiable humiliation of admitting that the peace built up by them after more than four months of incessant labour is, as Germany asserts, an unjust and impossible peace, for this is contrary to the truth.

ANDRÉ TARDIEU

The result was that the last-minute changes in the Treaty were of comparatively slight importance, except for the decision to hold a plebiscite in Upper Silesia, the outright cession of which to Poland had especially irritated the Germans. The reply of the Allies was drafted in a formal statement which was handed over on June 16. It accepted the

[1] M. Tardieu expresses here the general view, not sustained by the papers of Colonel House, which attribute the chief objection to Japanese claims to the Australian Prime Minister.

contention that the Treaty ought to be based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, but maintained that the Germans were in error in arguing that the Treaty and the pre-Armistice Agreement were not in accord. The Treaty was therefore left substantially intact for Germany to take or leave.

Whether the Germans would actually sign remained in doubt until June 23, and Marshal Foch made all necessary preparations for a movement of troops across the Rhine. The German Ministry resigned and it was only with difficulty that delegates could be found who would put their signatures to the document.

Colonel House remained in Paris until June 11, his time largely engaged with preparations for the organization of the League of Nations. After a week in England, he returned for final conferences with the President and to take part in the ceremony of signing at Versailles.

'*June* 10, 1919: Went to-day to see Sir William Orpen's portrait of the President. He has not given him a third sitting. Orpen was in despair because the President told him he would not be able to sit again. He did not tell him this until after the sitting yesterday, therefore Orpen said he had not done some of the things he would have done had he known it was to be the last. I told him not to worry, because I was sure we could get the President to sit for a third time as agreed. I like the portrait, although it shows up some of the President's prominent features. . . . It is an entirely different looking gentleman from Sargent's æsthetic scholar and has more of the "rough and tumble" look. I have seen him look as Sargent sees him one time in twenty, but I have seen him nineteen times out of twenty look as Orpen sees him. I think I never knew a man whose general appearance changed so much from hour to hour. . . .

'It is not the President's face alone that changes. He is one of the most difficult and complex characters I have ever

known. He is so contradictory that it is hard to pass judgment upon him. . . . When one gets access to him, there is no more charming man in all the world than Woodrow Wilson. I have never seen any one who did not leave his presence impressed. He could use this charm to enormous personal and public advantage if he would. . . .

'There is little left for me to do in Paris. The answer to the Germans is practically ready, and it is not intended that I should remain in Paris with Lansing, White, and Bliss to button up the matters that will be left over after Germany signs. I have been away from home for eight strenuous months, and while I do not feel at all tired, yet I would like to shift the scene. In a way I realize that in breaking up here it means the end of an epoch in my life, for after the Peace Conference is wound up I feel that I shall do other things than those I have been doing for so many years.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *June* 11, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Will you please read the enclosed draft of a letter which Drummond proposes to send to an American jurist among others, and let me know whether you approve of it?

I told Drummond that after consulting you I would suggest a distinguished American lawyer to whom this invitation might be sent. My own judgment would be Root, Chief Justice White, or Taft, in the order named. I think we need Taft in the United States this summer. The Chief Justice might not be willing to undertake this work, unconnected as it is with the work of the Supreme Court. Root's selection would be a happy one not only from the standpoint of international law but also politically.[1]

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

[1] The letter of Sir Eric Drummond, of which a draft was here submitted

'*June* 11, 1919: I have had a stirring day,' wrote House in his diary, 'preparatory to leaving for England to-morrow. The Brazilian delegate and a delegation of Georgians and the President himself were my most important visitors.

'The Georgians came to present their claims in person, although they had already given them to me in writing. I listened to their story with sympathy and promised to do what I could.

'The Brazilian delegate wished to see me first about the League of Nations and their representative upon the Secretariat which we had already encompassed. He wished to know when another meeting of the League would be held and where, but above all he wanted advice concerning the German ships interned by Brazil during the war. The French have offered to buy them, but they desire to pay for them in merchandise, or at best, they desire to give Brazil credit in France for the amount without arranging for them to get this money out of France. I advised that they stand firm for the moment.

'My interview with the President was in the nature of a farewell. The main thing we talked about was the appointment of an international lawyer of great standing to sit in London during the summer in the formation of the International Court as required by Article 14 of the Covenant. After we had talked the matter over, he too thought Root would be the best selection, because of the prominent part he has taken in urging an international court. Then too, the fact that he is a Republican will add something to the strength of his appointment.

'We discussed the Adriatic question, Germany's entrance into the League of Nations, Reparations, and a number of other matters. He asked me to suggest names for the differ-

to the President, inviting an American jurist to form part of the committee to draw up plans for the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice, was later sent to Mr. Root.

ent commissions on which the United States would have representatives in the event the Treaty was signed.

'I was disappointed to hear him say that he had agreed to have a plebiscite in Silesia. I am afraid it cannot be honestly carried out.'

IV

'*June* 20, 1919: Returned to Paris last night at seven o'clock, after a week of rest at Greenwood Gate, Sussex. . . .

'The President returned from Belgium this morning and had a meeting with all the Commissioners at eleven o'clock. . . . We first discussed the attitude we should take about the League of Nations. I thought we should take no part officially, but should advise unofficially until our Senate ratified the Treaty. This view met the approval of the President and the others. . . . I have made it clear to all the newspaper correspondents that no appointments will be made on any of the commissions of the League of Nations until after the Treaty has been ratified.

'*June* 21, 1919: Branting, Swedish ex-Prime Minister and Socialist, was an afternoon caller. He came to discuss the Aaland Island controversy with Finland and to ask my good offices in getting a just and immediate settlement.[1]

'After lunch I gave Sir William Orpen a final sitting. The President was there when I arrived. I talked to him for the last fifteen minutes of his sitting. Orpen has got a good portrait of him, though not a flattering one. His hair is seldom as ruffled as Orpen has it. . . . Orpen thanked me for having persuaded the President to sit for him.

'*June* 22, 1919: The Archbishop of Albania was an afternoon caller. He was a gorgeous spectacle with his heavy gold necklace, enormous gold cross, wide red sash, and red piping running down the front of his robe. I asked him to send me a memorandum in writing so I could more efficiently meet his desires.'

[1] The dispute was ultimately settled by the League.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *June* 23, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The morning after the Peace Treaty with Germany has been signed, the *Daily Mail* wishes to publish comments on the Treaty by President Poincaré, M. Clemenceau, and yourself, and they have asked me to ask you if you will be good enough to give them a short statement.

I have drafted the enclosed, which seems to me to be appropriate. I suggest that you authorize me to give this to them. Generally speaking they have supported you during the Conference, and I believe that your giving them this would be a graceful acknowledgment of this support.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Statement for Daily Mail

By the terms of the Treaty of Peace, the greatest possible measure of compensation has been provided for those people whose homes and lives were wrecked by the storm of war, and security has been given them that this storm shall never rise again. In so far as we came together to ensure these things, the work of the Conference is finished.

But in a larger sense, its work begins to-day. In answer to an unmistakable appeal, a League of Nations has been constituted and a Covenant has been drawn which shows the way to international understanding and to peace. We stand at the crossroads, however, and the way is only pointed out. Those who saw through the travail of war the vision of a world made secure for mankind must consecrate their lives to its realization.

Mr. Gilbert Close [1] *to Colonel House*

PARIS, *June* 24, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

The President asks me to return to you the enclosed statement for the *Daily Mail* and he would be obliged if you would give it out to the *Daily Mail* as from the President.

Sincerely yours

GILBERT F. CLOSE

'*June* 23, 1919: This has been a red-letter day. The Germans have notified us that they will sign the Treaty. I went to the Ministry of War to embrace Clemenceau and to be embraced in turn. When I congratulated him . . . he blessed all American men, women and children, and the House family individually and in general. He looked fatigued and he told me he was having great trouble not only with the Chamber but also with his Cabinet, and that he intended to resign within the next six weeks. I urged him to do so.

'We discussed the signing of the Treaty and whether it could be done before Friday. He thought not. I was rather insistent that it be hurried. The guns are being fired, rockets are going up, and crowds are parading the streets. It would seem better to wait until the actual signature had taken place. The Germans are not unlikely to refuse at the last moment or to do something to delay the signing.

'The sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow, and their signified intention of sending only one unimportant and unknown representative here to sign the Peace, is indicative of temper and unreliability. . . .

'The French are indignant and blame the British for not being more careful. Lloyd George has asked each of the Allied Governments to give an opinion whether the British exercised due care. . . .

'Clemenceau is angry with the Germans, first, about the

[1] Confidential Secretary to the President.

sinking of the German battle fleet at Scapa Flow; second, because of the burning of the French flags which Germany under the Treaty would be compelled to return to France. What he wishes to do is to send a note to the Germans immediately protesting against these acts, and then after the Treaty is signed move Allied troops into Essen as a punitive measure.

'General Bliss and I took the lead against such action. My advice was to not even send a protest, much less consent to the occupation of Essen. The great thing was to have the Treaty signed. After that was done, if it was thought wise, a protest might be sent Germany concerning the two incidents mentioned, preferably, though, laying the blame on the old Government and expressing a hope that the new Government would carry out in good faith the terms of the Treaty. My opinion was there would be lawless acts of this nature for some months, but after that Germany would get down to a real understanding of the situation and try to fulfill her obligations so far as she was able. . . .

'*June* 25, 1919: The British are trying to lay the blame for the sinking of the German ships upon us. They claim they wished to have the ships "surrendered" instead of "interned," but that we insisted upon internment. As a matter of fact, the British Navy did want them surrendered. Benson advocated internment and George, Clemenceau, Orlando, Foch, and I thought it might imperil the chances for the Armistice if we demanded surrender, and we therefore thought it wise to intern them.

'At the Armistice proceedings Foch made the remark that he would not give one French soldier's life for all the German ships afloat, and that to demand surrender might mean a continuance of the war and the loss of many lives.

'The reason the point is being raised is that the British Navy claim if the ships had been surrendered, they would

have put their own crews on board; but since they were interned, it was necessary under the terms of the Armistice to leave the Germans in charge — hence the sinking.[1]

'Our Navy people, with whom I have talked, do not agree with this view.

'*June* 26, 1919: Vesnitch came to discuss the League of Nations and the disappointment felt by the Slavic people because none of them were placed upon the Council of the League. He pointed out that there were Belgium, France, Spain, Italy and Brazil, five Latin peoples, and out of more than two hundred million Slavic peoples there was not one [representative in the Council]. This was a stupid blunder for which I am largely responsible. The oversight comes from not having planned in advance.

'*June* 28, 1919: This is the great day. I did very little in the morning. Beer went to the meeting of the Commission on Mandates and represented me. The next meeting will be in London ten days from now. . . .

'I was successful in getting practically all my secretariat still in Paris to Versailles to witness the ceremonies.

'I did not leave the Crillon until about 2.15 and reached my seat about ten minutes before the Germans arrived. . . . The approach to Versailles was an imposing sight, as indeed was the entrance to the Palace. Thousands of people lined the roadway from Paris to Versailles, increasing in number as we drew near the Palace. There was a great display of cavalry with pennants flying, and upon the Grand Stairway, which witnessed the last stand of the bodyguards during the French Revolution, chasseurs in gorgeous uniforms lined both sides up to the very entrance of the Salle des Glaces, where the signing took place.

'Balfour and I went in together, and presently were joined by Lloyd George and Sonnino. I lingered behind in order not to get into the crowd that was pressing through the

[1] See above, Chapter V.

only door at which entrance was possible. The ceremonies lasted nearly an hour. . . .

'When the Germans had signed and the great Allied Powers had done so, the cannons began to boom. I had a feeling of sympathy for the Germans who sat there quite stoically. It was not unlike what was done in olden times, when the conqueror dragged the conquered at his chariot wheels. To my mind, it is out of keeping with the new era which we profess an ardent desire to promote. I wish it could have been more simple and that there might have been an element of chivalry, which was wholly lacking. The affair was elaborately staged and made as humiliating to the enemy as it well could be.

'After the signing we went to the terrace to see the fountains, which were playing for the first time since the war began. Aeroplanes were in the air, guns were being fired, and the thousands surrounding Versailles made a brilliant and memorable scene.

'We went to the station to see the President and his party off. There was a large crowd of notables. . . . I compared it to the last leave-taking, very much to the credit of this one. There was more enthusiasm, there were more people, and the whole affair was more brilliant and successful.

'*June* 29, 1919: My last conversation with the President yesterday was not reassuring. I urged him to meet the Senate in a conciliatory spirit; if he treated them with the same consideration he had used with his foreign colleagues here, all would be well. In reply he said, "House, I have found one can never get anything in this life that is worth while without fighting for it." I combated this, and reminded him that Anglo-Saxon civilization was built up on compromise. . . .'

V

'*June* 29, 1919: I am leaving Paris, after eight fateful months, with conflicting emotions. Looking at the Con-

ference in retrospect there is much to approve and much to regret. It is easy to say what should have been done, but more difficult to have found a way for doing it.

'The bitterness engendered by the war, the hopes raised high in many quarters because of victory, the character of the men having the dominant voices in the making of the Treaty, all had their influence for good or for evil, and were to be reckoned with. There seemed to be no full realization of the conditions which had to be met. An effort was made to enact a peace upon the usual lines. This should never have been attempted. The greater part of civilization had been shattered and history could guide us but little in the making of this peace.

'How splendid it would have been had we blazed a new and better trail! However, it is to be doubted whether this could have been done, even if those in authority had so decreed, for the peoples back of them had to be reckoned with. It may be that Wilson might have had the power and influence if he had remained in Washington and kept clear of the Conference. When he stepped from his lofty pedestal and wrangled with representatives of other states upon equal terms, he became as common clay.

'I wonder what motives actuated Clemenceau when he receded from his first position and chose to welcome the President into the arena where the debates concerning peace were to proceed day by day. I doubt whether he saw that its effect would be to lessen Wilson's commanding influence, and bring it nearer a level with that of Lloyd George and his own. It is more likely that he was content to accept my assurance that the President would readily acquiesce in having him, Clemenceau, preside over the Congress, and it may well be that he considered that France would fare better if Wilson could sit in conference and obtain an intimate knowledge of France's claims against the Central Powers.

'To those who are saying that the Treaty is bad and should

COLONEL AND MRS. HOUSE AT VERSAILLES
AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY

never have been made and that it will involve Europe in infinite difficulties in its enforcement, I feel like admitting it. But I would also say in reply that empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance. To create new boundaries is always to create new troubles. The one follows the other. While I should have preferred a different peace, I doubt whether it could have been made, for the ingredients for such a peace as I would have had were lacking at Paris. And even if those of us like Smuts, Botha, and Cecil could have had our will, as much trouble might have followed a peace of our making as seems certain to follow this.

'The same forces that have been at work in the making of this peace would be at work to hinder the enforcement of a different kind of peace, and no one can say with certitude that anything better than has been done could be done at this time. We have had to deal with a situation pregnant with difficulties and one which could be met only by an unselfish and idealistic spirit, which was almost wholly absent and which was too much to expect of men come together at such a time and for such a purpose.

'And yet I wish we had taken the other road, even if it were less smooth, both now and afterward, than the one we took. We would at least have gone in the right direction and if those who follow us had made it impossible to go the full length of the journey planned, the responsibility would have rested with them and not with us.'

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

A great many people, Democrats, Progressives, and Republicans, have talked with me about ratification of the Treaty and they are all pretty much of one mind regarding the necessity for its passage with or without reservations. To the ordinary man, the distance between the Treaty and the reservations is slight. . . . To-day there are millions of helpless people throughout the world who look to you and you only. . . .

Colonel House to President Wilson, November 24, 1919.

I

On the day following the signing of the Versailles Treaty, President Wilson embarked upon the *George Washington* at Brest. His nerves were worn and his physique shaken, but his spirits were high. If he guessed anything of the struggle that lay before him in the United States, he concealed the suspicion. The feeling of those that accompanied him on the boat was that the Senate must and would ratify the Treaty; that the country would enter enthusiastically upon the venture of the League of Nations.

It was for the purpose of hastening the practical development of the League that the President asked Colonel House to proceed to London, where, during the ensuing six weeks, he met with the commission appointed by the Peace Conference to draft definite conditions for the operation of Mandates. House had early been convinced that the Mandates offered the foundation of a new and most desirable development in international affairs; as early as 1914 he had advocated a system of international supervision of colonial areas.[1] Not gladly but willingly, therefore, he buried himself in a mass of technical details, the sort of task for which ordinarily he had little taste; fortunately he had as adviser George Louis Beer, who had been recognized as one of the

[1] See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, I, 264–67.

two or three chiefly responsible for the projected colonial system. 'A new trail was blazed,' wrote Colonel House, 'and he [Beer] was one of the foremost axemen.' [1]

House's keenest interest was directed towards the more general aspects of the establishment of the League of Nations as an operating organization, and to the elimination of the political factors in Europe that might hinder its success. During the Peace Conference the League had been generally regarded as primarily the protégé of President Wilson; but as the summer of 1919 progressed, there were signs that the European statesmen saw in the League an opportunity both for the execution of the Treaties and for the handling of problems left unsolved at Paris. Evidently it was taken for granted that the Covenant would be ratified by the Senate and that the United States would assume as leading a rôle in the inauguration of the League as it had in the drafting of the Covenant.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *September* 12, 1919

I have received the following letter [dated September 4] from Clemenceau. It indicates a growing enthusiasm for the League. I think there is now general agreement that the meeting of the Assembly should be held in Washington just as soon after the Senate ratifies the Treaty as possible. I think, too, that only a mere *pro forma* meeting of the Council to put in effect that clause of the Treaty relating to the Saar Valley should be held over here. The real meeting of the Council should be held in Washington. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

[1] *George Louis Beer* (Macmillan Co., 1924), 5–6. When the Secretariat of the League of Nations was organized, Mr. Beer was selected as head of the Mandates Commission. His untimely death robbed the League of one of its ablest supporters.

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, *September* 4, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you in Paris before your departure for America. But as our friend Tardieu tells me that the date is not certain, it seems to me advisable to communicate to you immediately the reflections which are suggested to me by the possibility of decisions to be made with reference to the League of Nations.

It seems to me, first of all, that there will be urgent need for convening the First Assembly of the League as soou as possible in Washington, to be presided over by your President. In view of the hopes to which the League has given rise and in order to facilitate the solution of the international problems with which all the nations are now grappling, I would suggest that this meeting should take place during November. I would at the same time propose to invite the greatest possible number of statesmen whose names have been associated with the creation of the League of Nations.

Doubtless in November there will be only a small amount of current business to transact, but the programme will have at least the capital advantage of setting the League in motion, whereas it as yet exists only on paper.

That seems to me of prime importance, whether in the execution of the Peace Treaty or for the settling of the problems which the Treaty does not solve and which nevertheless result from the war. It will then be clear to every one that the League exists in its full moral force.

It is true that the execution of the Treaty is entrusted to a certain number of commissions or experts who will necessarily be led to consult their Governments. But there are many articles of the Treaty which involve the Council of the League of Nations itself, and in this connection all nations ought to have the impression that this Council is ready to function as soon as it is called upon.

On the other hand, I am sure that you agree with me that in these matters neither the action of the Governments nor even that of the League of Nations can be effective unless preceded by a moral preparation of the people, which will furnish both the condition and the sanction of the necessary results.

Moreover, in the midst of the thousand difficulties which are appearing or have already appeared to all the Governments, it is necessary, in my opinion, that the League of Nations, endowed with a recognized personality, should be able to recommend and enforce all solutions of 'fair play' in the current order of life. In case of a crisis, it is important that it should make itself heard with a firm voice.

Finally, do you not think that there would be a great advantage if the rightful members of the League were put in a position to exchange their ideas upon the general direction of action to be taken? No man is better qualified than President Wilson to recall to the nations, upon the opening of the First Assembly, that the League of Nations will have prestige and influence during peace-time only if it succeeds in maintaining and developing the feeling of international solidarity of which it was born during the war upon the call of the President. For my part I should be happy to second him in this task.

Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately

CLEMENCEAU

P.S. I am sending a similar letter to Mr. Lloyd George.

II

Partly because House believed that Anglo-American friendship was essential to the success of the League of Nations, partly because of the personal interest that he had always taken in the problem, he studied assiduously all of the factors that might disturb the relations of the British

Empire and the United States.[1] The war had left the two Powers apparently the strongest in the world; a cordial understanding between them would help to guarantee the tranquillity of the new international system, just as disagreement or misunderstanding would threaten it.

The Lloyd George Government in Great Britain appreciated fully the desirability of settling all outstanding questions with the United States; with rare insight they decided that no one was so well fitted as Lord Grey to undertake this delicate task of vital importance, for there was no Englishman in whose integrity of purpose the average thoughtful American had so much confidence. House was impressed by both the dangers and the opportunities of the situation and wrote to Wilson regarding them at some length. He had already discovered the germs of the feeling which seven years later was to transform the cognomen 'Uncle Sam' into 'Uncle Shylock.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, *July* 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Almost as soon as I arrived in England, I sensed an antagonism to the United States. The English are quite as cordial and hospitable to the individual American as ever, but they dislike us collectively. . . . While the British Empire vastly exceeds the United States in area and population and while their aggregate wealth is perhaps greater than

[1] An article by Eugenia B. Frothingham throws some light upon the attitude of English statesmen toward Colonel House's endeavors for peace. In the Boston *Transcript*, February 25, 1928, she recounts a conversation with the Earl of Oxford and Asquith shortly before his death: '. . . I asked him if the statesmen of Europe struggling for breath and life during the World War did not ultimately tire of Colonel House and his various peace plans, and ask themselves why this small unofficial person should keep thrusting himself into their affairs. At this Asquith struck the terrace with his cane and said there would have been more of breath and life if the plans of Colonel House had been acted upon. . . .'

ours, yet our position is much more favorable. It is because of this that the relations between the two countries are beginning to assume the same character as that of England and Germany before the war.

By her industry and organization Germany was forging ahead as the first Power in the world, but she lost everything by her arrogance and lack of statesmanship. Will it be Great Britain or the United States who will next commit this colossal blunder? If we are far-sighted we will conduct ourselves so as to merit the friendship of all nations, for it is to me conceivable that there may come a time when we will need it. . . .

Haldane, Grey, and I dined together on Sunday. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the Government's request to Grey to become Ambassador at Washington. Curzon, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, at Lloyd George's instance, asked Haldane to use his good offices with Grey, and Haldane, in turn, asked me to help. Haldane told Grey and me that the three matters that the Government had in mind to settle [1] with the United States were, first, the naval building programme, second, the Irish question, and third, the League of Nations. Grey said that in no circumstances would he become Ambassador, but he would consider going out on a special mission for the purpose of discussing these questions, provided the Government agreed with him about them. He thought there would be no difficulty in regard to the League of Nations or the naval programme, but he was insistent that they should outline their Irish policy and that it should be one with which he could agree. I suggested that Lloyd George and Curzon be told that it was impossible to discuss an abstract question and that he, Grey, wanted to know . . . their Irish programme before even considering the

[1] Later, Colonel House, who showed a copy of this letter to Lord Grey and Lord Haldane, wrote that he should have used the word 'discuss' instead of 'settle.' (E. M. H. to C. S., July 4, 1928.)

question of accepting their offer. This would place the burden on the Government rather than upon Grey.

As to the naval building programme, Grey told Haldane that he would write him a memorandum which he could hand to the Government. This memorandum would outline his, Grey's, views which are as follows:

That in no circumstances would Great Britain build against the United States no matter how many keels we laid. However, England would hold herself free to build against any European Power in any quantity that seemed to her best. On the other hand, the United States could exercise her own judgment about building. . . .

Grey told me in this conversation and in another I had with him some two weeks ago that the British Government's policy during the time he was in office was to disregard the naval programme of the United States. In the first place, they thought war between the two nations was inconceivable, and in the second, that in a rivalry it was admitted that the United States could outbuild Great Britain. In discussing this matter further with Grey, he admitted that this was the Liberal point of view and not the Conservative or the one held in naval circles. . . .

You may be surprised that I am not taking into account the League of Nations as a preventive, not only for trouble with Great Britain but also as a deterrent in naval armaments. I consider the League as the great hope of a peaceful solution of all these vexatious international jealousies, but we must admit that it is a long cry from to-day to the time when the League shall have proved itself such an instrument as we all hope it may be. The fact that this Government wishes an Ambassador of Grey's standing to go to America to discuss the question of naval armaments indicates that they do not expect it to be reached through the League of Nations.

You will have noticed that the British have been very insistent upon reduction of standing armies, but they never

protest against naval armaments. One of the necessary things to be done in my opinion is the creation of an international code of laws covering both land and sea. It is your belief that in the next war there will be no neutrals, therefore there is no necessity for a revision of the laws of the sea. I do not agree with this position. It is quite conceivable that war might come between say France and England in which no other nations would be involved. However, the lack of sea laws would almost inevitably bring us into the conflict. If, on the other hand, we had a charter which all nations had accepted, then any two belligerents would of necessity have to conform to it or bring the world in arms upon themselves. This question of the Freedom of the Seas is the one thing above all others that brought us into the war, and yet it is no nearer solution to-day than it was before Germany collapsed. . . .

I do not know that I would advise doing anything more at present than to call attention to the fact that it was your purpose to ask consideration of the question some time within the near future. In the mean time, there might be a Government here sympathetic to the view that a general international understanding upon this subject should be reached.

It is my judgment that we should go ahead as rapidly as possible with the organization of the League of Nations, and at the first meeting of the Assembly bring up the question of a reduction of armaments and seek an agreement. Do you not think also that our people should be warned not to expect complete payment of loans to the Entente? Should they not be asked to consider a large share of these loans as a part of our necessary war expenditures, and should not an adjustment be suggested by us and not by our debtors? If this is done, then it would be well to do it with a *beau geste*. For instance, I notice we have sold our one billion of war material in France to the French Government for three

hundred millions. Would it not have been better to have made this a gift in name as, indeed, it is in fact? . . .

If I were you I should take some early occasion to invoke the sober attention of our people to these dangers. The world is in a belligerent mood, and the next ten years will be the most dangerous to its peace. If we can get over this period safely and get the League in satisfactory operation, war may conceivably become almost obsolete. Could you serve mankind better at the moment than to caution all to sit steady in the boat, and do what is possible to bring things back to the normal? At present, the world is a long way from being safe, and another upheaval now may completely wreck civilization.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

A week later, on August 8, Colonel House cabled to the President that he had continued his conferences with Lord Grey and Lord Haldane, regarding the conditions under which Lord Grey would undertake the mission to Washington. 'There would be no difficulty regarding the League of Nations,' he wrote, for the British Government like President Wilson was determined to support it actively. 'As to the naval programme there must be no rivalry. Great Britain should not undertake to build against us no matter how many keels we laid down. . . . Great Britain was to be free to build whatever she thought necessary for her protection against any European Power.' As to Ireland, the British Government was evidently determined to arrange for such a revision of home rule that this problem would cease to operate as a cause of friction between Great Britain and the United States. The British could hardly admit the possibility of their Irish policy being influenced by any consideration other than its intrinsic merits. But no thoughtful person in either Great Britain or the United States could fail

to realize the happy effect upon the relations of the two countries that would result from a permanent settlement of the Irish problem. Both President Wilson and Colonel House were keenly alive to its importance.

The programme outlined by Lord Grey and Lord Haldane was apparently acceptable to the Lloyd George Ministry. 'An announcement may be made immediately,' cabled House. 'If Grey goes under these conditions the most vexatious subjects between the two countries will be in a fair way for settlement. The Prime Minister insists that this shall be entirely confidential until publication.' [1]

The Grey Mission afforded the strongest possible basis for close Anglo-American coöperation in world affairs. President Wilson wrote to House of his great interest in the possible appointment of Grey: I am delighted to believe that his health permits him to accept this appointment and shall look forward with great pleasure to being associated with him.

Lord Grey sailed in September, accompanied by Sir William Tyrrell. But the hopes centered in the Mission were destroyed by the illness of President Wilson. Confined to a sick-room during all the period of Lord Grey's stay in the United States, he was never able to receive the Ambassador; and there was no one to take the President's place in the expected discussions of how best to promote coöperation between Great Britain and America. Nine years later Lord Grey commented on the situation as follows: [2]

'My own views are according to my recollection correctly stated by Colonel House.

'I was strongly in favour of the League of Nations and was therefore most anxious that the United States should decide to join it. But the question became one of internal

[1] House to Wilson, August 8, 1919.

[2] Lord Grey to C. S., July 4, 1928.

political controversy in the United States, from which an Ambassador was bound to abstain.

'I remain of opinion that Britain should not build in competition with the United States Navy. This view was expressed by me in a letter to the *Times* after the failure of the Three Power Naval Conference at Geneva: it was the view held before the war and would naturally be the one expressed to Colonel House in 1919.

'I had no part in the settlement eventually made with Ireland, but the view expressed by me to Colonel House agrees with what the British Government subsequently did.

'Before I landed in America, President Wilson was struck down by illness. This was a tragedy fraught with grave consequences for the United States and for Europe. The fact that my sojourn in Washington was rendered abortive was an inevitable but only a very minor detail in what amounted to a political catastrophe.

'There was much in my visit to the United States that I found very interesting, much that was exceedingly pleasant and that I remember with very sincere gratitude; but circumstances made it impossible for this mission to have practical political importance, and all that is said of it now can have but academic interest.'

Apart from the settlement, on a sure basis, of Anglo-American relations, House believed that the most important of issues affecting the coöperation of the United States and Europe was the problem of interallied debts. This he raised again in a letter to President Wilson just before he sailed for the United States.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *September* 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

There are several things that I want to suggest to you when I reach home, but the most urgent one is that of the readjustment of the finances of the Allied countries. It is a question which England, France, and the United States have evaded up to the present, but there will soon come a time when this can no longer be done. The British and French have merely makeshift plans. I was particularly struck by the English Chancellor of the Exchequer's lack of anything further than palliative measures. . . .

I have talked to Lloyd George and Bonar Law in a tentative way and also with Clemenceau and Tardieu. They all appreciate the necessity for action, and England and France will undertake some sort of relief from the intolerable burden even if we decline to join them.

The plan I have in mind . . . is:

(1) The shifting of the burden of debt from one country to another and leaving the Central Powers to go bankrupt if any one indeed is to go.

(2) The United States and Great Britain should fund the interest on the Allied debts for a period of from three to five years, and agree to defer capital payments for at least five years.

(3) Great Britain to accept from France obligations of the Governments of Serbia, Roumania, Greece, etc., held by France; the United States to accept from Great Britain and France the obligations of nations indebted to them, and all in accordance with a well-worked-out formula which will make for an equitable adjustment.

(4) The United States and possibly Great Britain to accept some portion of the Reparation bonds received from Germany in settlement of a certain percentage of the Allied

debts remaining after the transfers have been made as suggested in paragraph 2.

(5) When the Reparations debts of the Central Powers are defined by the Reparations Commission for a practicable amount, then there should be a scaling of the German obligations between all the Allied and Associated nations.

(6) The plan should contemplate some adjustment whereby foreign exchange should be stabilized.

The benefits to the United States in such a plan would be:

(*a*) It would reduce or eliminate duplication of debt.

(*b*) It would give the United States a financial interest in Reparations payments by the Central Powers.

(*c*) It would place the United States in a position where, as a matter of right, it could deal with Reparations payments as one of the creditors.

(*d*) It would relieve our foreign relations of their most dangerous and difficult elements.

(*e*) It would stabilize the finances of the world and we would thereby be the chief beneficiary.

(*f*) It would make secure a large part of our foreign loans which otherwise will be worthless. . . .

Both England and France understand that they cannot possibly collect from the debtor nations the full amounts due them. If they undertake to do so, it will not only disturb existing good relations, but it will throw such countries into bankruptcy, and the effect upon the creditor nations will be but little less harmful than that suffered by the debtor nations.

I believe our people will be willing to charge a part of our foreign loans to war expenditures — particularly if they find England and France doing likewise. England has loaned Russia nearly three billion dollars and she has loaned France and Italy together nearly four billions of dollars. She did not do this because she loved either Russia, France, or Italy to any such extent; she did it merely as a part of her own war

expenditures. The purpose was to defeat Germany and she could do it best by sustaining her allies.

We were actuated by the same motives and we should be willing to take this view. If some such settlement as I have outlined is not made, it is certain we will not be able to collect our debts in full, and it is also certain that we will incur the everlasting ill will of those to whom we have advanced loans.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

P.S. If this or some plan like it is adopted, it would be necessary to insist that an adequate system of taxation should be put in force in those Continental countries whose debts England and the United States were refunding.

III

While House was working in London and Paris to further the fortunes of the League and lessen the forces of international distrust, President Wilson was fighting for the League in his tour through the Western States. He set forth from Washington on September 3 and delivered more than thirty speeches. What might have been the result if his physical powers had proved capable of bearing the strain after the long struggle in Paris, no one can assert. But on September 25, he collapsed and was hurried back to the Capital. The forces battling for the Covenant lost their leader.

By a curious coincidence and mischance, Colonel House also fell ill at the moment when he took ship for the United States. Warned by cable of the President's breakdown, he planned to return to Washington, where he hoped to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its hearings on the Treaty. He now realized as he had not realized before, the imminent danger that the Senate would refuse to ratify the Treaty, including the Covenant, unless extensive reservations were introduced. But his condition became

worse during the voyage, and he left the ship in a state of almost complete collapse. At the moment when the cause to which each had devoted his main interest was weighed in the scales of fortune, Wilson and House lay ill, the one in Washington, the other in New York. Quite helpless, House still promised himself that if he could accomplish anything for the Covenant he would go to the Capital and offer his testimony.

Colonel House to Senator Lodge

NEW YORK, *October* 13, 1919

MY DEAR SENATOR LODGE:

As soon as I had finished the work in Europe with which I had been entrusted, I came home. Unfortunately I fell ill the day I left Paris and have been confined to my bed since.

I am asking Commander McLean who attended me on shipboard to explain to you my condition and when I would likely be able to come to Washington in the event your Committee think I may give any information which may be useful.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Senator Lodge to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *October* 18, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I received your letter yesterday through the kindness of Commander McLean, and much regretted to hear from him how ill you had been and how much you had suffered. If you will let me know when you feel entirely able to come before the Committee, I will lay the matter before the Committee with great pleasure and let you know their views in regard to it. Our hearings, of course, were ended some time ago and

final action on the Treaty is drawing very near, but when I hear from you I shall be very glad to ask the Committee whether they desire to put you to the trouble of coming before them.

Very truly yours

H. C. LODGE

Colonel Stephen Bonsal's Memorandum for Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *November* 1, 1919

I saw Senator Lodge last evening just as he was leaving for Boston and gave him your message to the effect that you were unreservedly at the disposal of the Foreign Relations Committee from Wednesday next, and, further, that in the circumstances it would be convenient for you to know if the Committee proposed calling you, and, if so, approximately when.

Senator Lodge answered: 'Write, or telegraph Colonel House from me that I have, and I believe all members of the Committee have, full appreciation of his ready willingness to appear, and to assist us. We have had enough of the other thing to appreciate his attitude. . . .

'Unfortunately, perhaps, before Colonel House reached America, the formal hearings of the Committee had ended, and I do not think they will be reopened. The advisibility of calling Colonel House has been twice before the Committee recently, and every member understands that Colonel House has placed himself unreservedly at our disposal. I have on two occasions made a statement to this effect to the Press representatives who follow our hearings, and should the question be raised, or should it seem advisable to raise it, I would consider it my duty to testify on the floor of the Senate to the Colonel's frank and straightforward attitude toward our Committee.

'The question of reopening the hearings is so uncertain

that I think Colonel House should have no other thought but as to what is best for his health. I suggest that when he reaches his daughter's home, or wherever his doctor desires him to go, he might drop me a line telling me of his whereabouts, and the state of his health. Then, if the hearings are reopened, I would bring the letter before the Committee. In any case let Colonel House rest assured that we appreciate his helpful attitude, and that, should he be called, we will not hurry him, but have a proper appreciation of his convenience and his need of rest.'

This may be regarded as the end of the Senator's official statement as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for transmission to Colonel House. He added, however, the following opinions:

'Personally, Bonsal, I do not think there is one chance in a hundred of Colonel House being summoned. The record is made up. We think we know all the facts, and it looks as if every one has made up his mind how he will vote. Later on, rather than now, I think Colonel House's presence here in Washington would prove helpful, and this is another reason why I think he should for the moment do what is best for his health, and certainly not wait around in New York on the off chance that he might be summoned.'

STEPHEN BONSAL

In the mean time the struggle in the Senate over the ratification of the Treaty was approaching. President Wilson's complete breakdown isolated him in the White House; none of his political advisers were allowed to enter the sick-room. The Democratic forces fighting for ratification were deprived of effective leadership. There was no one to guide the fortunes of the Covenant; no one to negotiate a compromise with the Republicans in the Senate. The President himself was naturally unable to judge from the isolation of his room of the necessity of compromise, if the Treaty and

the Covenant were not to be defeated; he refused to accept the Lodge Resolution which included strong reservations. 'In my opinion,' wrote the President, 'the resolution in that form does not provide for ratification but rather for nullification of the Treaty. I sincerely hope that the friends and supporters of the Treaty will vote against the Lodge Resolution.' Thus urged, the Democrats voted with the 'bitter-enders,' defeating ratification on November 19 by a vote of 55 to 39. Had the Democrats disregarded the President's wishes and voted for ratification including the Lodge Reservations, the Treaty would have been ratified by a vote of 81 to 13.[1]

Colonel House, ill and away from Washington, had taken no part in the struggle. In his own heart he believed that compromise was necessary and wise, but, because of the President's illness, he had refused to urge him to this course, despite the many appeals from friends of the League, who feared for the fate of the Covenant.[2]

[1] When the Treaty was reintroduced in the Senate in the following spring with the Lodge Reservations, ratification was again defeated, lacking the necessary two-thirds by 7 votes. The final vote was 49 for ratification, 35 against. In a letter to Senator Hitchcock, President Wilson reaffirmed his determined unwillingness to accept the reservations, especially any changes in Article X of the Covenant. Had the Democrats who voted against ratification (23 in number) voted for it, the Treaty would have been ratified by a vote of 72 to 12.

[2] Compromise was urged upon the President by leading advocates of the League of Nations during the winter and following spring. The following appeal from the League of Free Nations Association is typical:

'The undersigned, who believe in those principles of international relations which you have enunciated and in support of which you are justly regarded as the leader of the world's thought, submit to you their earnest hope that you will accept such reservations to the Treaty of Versailles as may be necessary to obtain the consent of the Senate to its ratification and thus permit the immediate association of the United States in the League of Nations. . . .

'You have performed your duty of honor in endeavoring to obtain the ratification of the Treaty as you signed it at Paris. The responsibility for the reservations and their defects rests with their authors and not with the author of the Covenant.

'But even with the reservations the Covenant with the moral force of

After the defeat of the Lodge Resolution for ratification, with its reservations, and an equally decisive defeat of Underwood's Resolution for unconditional ratification, House felt that only one course remained which might save the Covenant. The effort for unconditional ratification had failed. Wilson believed that he could not desert his Paris colleagues by negotiating reservations that would alter the sense of the Treaty, or give the United States a preferred position in the League. But the President might now give the Senate a free hand and agree to present to the Allies any resolutions formulated by the majority, permitting the Allies to decide whether they preferred to accept them or to see the United States stay out of the League.

The personal character of the struggle over reservations, which at times seemed like a conflict between Wilson and Lodge, would thus be eliminated. House, after long talks with Lord Grey, was also convinced that the Allies would accept the Lodge Reservations, if through them alone the United States could be brought into the League. After all, the success of the League of Nations would not depend upon this phrase or that, nor upon the acceptance or refusal of a reservation, but upon the spirit of the nations that composed the League. For the maintenance of future peace it was of vital importance that the United States should not stand aside. If it returned to the traditional path of isolation, the entire Wilsonian policy would be threatened with bankruptcy. All this House wrote to the President in two long letters.

the United States under your leadership behind it is of such value to humanity at this moment that we look to you to carry it now into effect and to lead the world's opinion in its operation.'

Among the signers of this appeal were Ray Stannard Baker, Isaiah Bowman, Stephen P. Duggan, Edward A. Filene, Cardinal Gibbons, Norman Hapgood, Hamilton Holt, David Hunter Miller, Ellery Sedgwick, Ida Tarbell.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *November* 24, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I hesitate to intrude my views upon you at such a time, but I feel that I would be doing less than my duty if I did not do so, since so much depends upon your decision in regard to the Treaty. Its failure would be a disaster not less to civilization than to you.

My suggestion is this: Do not mention the Treaty in your message to Congress, but return it to the Senate as soon as it convenes. In the mean time, send for Senator Hitchcock and tell him that you feel that you have done your duty and have fulfilled your every obligation to your colleagues in Paris by rejecting all offers to alter the document which was formulated there, and you now turn the Treaty over to the Senate for such action as it may deem wise to take.

I would advise him to ask the Democratic Senators to vote for the Treaty with such reservations as the majority may formulate, and let the matter then rest with the other signatories of the Treaty. I would say to Senator Hitchcock that if the Allied and Associated Powers are willing to accept the reservations which the Senate see fit to make, you will abide by the result being conscious of having done your full duty.

The Allies may not take the Treaty with the Lodge Reservations as they now stand, and this will be your vindication. But even if they should take them with slight modifications, your conscience will be clear. After agreement is reached, it can easily be shown that the Covenant in its practical workings in the future will not be seriously hampered and that time will give us a workable machine.

A great many people, Democrats, Progressives, and Republicans, have talked with me about ratification of the Treaty and they are all pretty much of one mind regarding the necessity for its passage with or without reservations.

To the ordinary man, the distance between the Treaty and the reservations is slight.

Of course, the arguments are all with the position you have taken and against that of the Senate, but, unfortunately, no amount of logic can alter the situation; therefore my advice would be to make no further argument, but return the Treaty to the Senate without comment and let Senator Hitchcock know that you expect it to be ratified in some form, and then let the other signatories decide for themselves whether they will accept it.

The supreme place which history will give you will be largely because you personify in yourself the great idealistic conception of a league of nations. If this conception fails, it will be your failure. To-day there are millions of helpless people throughout the world who look to you and you only to make this conception a realization.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *November* 27, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am wondering if I made myself clear to you in my letter of the other day.

I wish to emphasize the fact that I do not counsel surrender. The action advised will in my opinion make your position consistent and impregnable. Any other way out that now seems possible of success would be something of a surrender.

Practically every one who is in close touch with the situation admits that the Treaty cannot be ratified without substantial reservations. You must not be a party to those reservations. You stood for the Treaty as it was made in Paris, but if the Senate refuses to ratify without reservations, under the circumstances, I would let the Allies determine whether or not they will accept them.

This does not mean that no effort will be made by those Senators and others who favor the Treaty as it is to make the reservations as innocuous as possible. Neither does it mean that the Allies will accept the Treaty as the Senate majority have desired it.

If you take the stand indicated, it will aid rather than hinder those working for mild reservations. It will absolutely ensure the passage of the Treaty and probably in a form acceptable to both you and the Allies.

I did not make the suggestion until I had checked it up with some of your friends in whom I felt you had confidence, for the matter is of such incalculable importance that I did not dare rely solely upon my own judgment.

In conclusion, let me suggest that Senator Hitchcock be warned not to make any public statement regarding your views. When the Treaty is ratified, then I hope you will make a statement letting your position become known.

I feel as certain as I ever did of anything that your attitude would receive universal approval. On the one hand your loyalty to our Allies will be commended, and, on the other, your willingness to accept reservations rather than have the Treaty killed will be regarded as the act of a great man.

Affectionately yours

E. M. House

Neither of these letters was answered.

IV

Historians will naturally ask whether the advice given by House might not have been followed, with the probability that the United States would have entered the League with the Lodge Reservations, if the personal relations of the President and House had not been interrupted. At the time of the Senate discussions on the Treaty each lay upon a sick-bed, and when House had regained sufficient strength to

make the journey to Washington the President was still denied visitors by orders of his doctor.

It is also true that the relations of Wilson and House had undergone a certain change during the course of the Peace Conference, so it is possible that, apart from the physical separation enforced by illness, House's advice might not have been followed so closely as in times previous. The exact nature of this change and the reasons for it have never received adequate explanation. Much that has been printed is certainly incorrect. It is said that the President was informed that House had betrayed Wilson's policies during the latter's absence from Paris in February, and that thereafter he withheld his trust.[1] But it is a demonstrable fact that when the President fell ill very shortly afterwards, he chose House to take his place in the Council of Four and endorsed all the steps taken by House to achieve a compromise. All during the delicate negotiations of April with the British and the French, Mr. Wilson used Colonel House as intermediary. He asked him to explain to Clemenceau the American position on controversial issues. He gave him his own comments on French proposals to carry to Tardieu, asking him to warn the French that he could not yield.[2] He sent him numerous documents with the request: Won't you be kind enough to give your opinion? . . . Affectionately yours.[3] . . . Let me have your comments. . . . Affectionately.[4] Or again: I would like a suggestion from you. . . . Affectionately yours.[5] What do you suggest? . . . Affectionately.[6] Please thank Mr. —— for me. . . . Affectionately yours.[7] President

[1] R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, chapters XVI, XVII. See above, Chapter X, for a discussion of the lack of foundation for the attack on House and Balfour.

[2] Wilson to House, April 12, 1919.

[3] Wilson to House, March 18, 1919

[4] Wilson to House, March 20, 1919

[5] Wilson to House, April 19, 1919.

[6] Wilson to House, May 13, 1919.

[7] Wilson to House, June 7, 1919.

Wilson accepted Colonel House's final statement as to the work of the Peace Conference, and authorized its publication over his own name.[1] He chose House as his representative in the discussions with Lord Robert Cecil that led to the setting-up of the League of Nations, the project nearest his heart; and sent him to London to work out a system of Mandates. All this would hardly have been possible if he had lost confidence in him.

It is also said that the President was irritated because on one occasion he called upon House at the Crillon, only to have his visit interrupted by announcement, in a continued series, of Clemenceau and other distinguished visitors. Neither the diary of Colonel House nor his visitors-book or 'log,' kept by the naval yeomen who gave admission to his apartment, indicates any basis for this story. When it later was brought to House's attention, he gave as his recollection the following: 'The President called first. In a few minutes we were interrupted by the announcement of Clemenceau. I excused myself and talked with Clemenceau for a few minutes, then together we joined Wilson who was waiting in my study. Meanwhile Cecil and one or two others sent in their cards. These I allowed to wait until after Clemenceau and Wilson had departed. No importance was attached by me to the incident.'[2]

It should be remembered that the Peace Conference was the first occasion upon which Colonel House worked with Wilson in an official capacity. Here for the first time close observers noted or thought that they noted, something of a break in the perfect confidence that had always existed between the two men. It is equally true that there is no scrap of evidence in all of House's papers indicating any specific reason for a rift in their relations during the course of the Peace Conference. Then, as always, they agreed absolutely

[1] See above, p. 484.

[2] Colonel House to C. S., June 17, 1928.

upon principles. When, as in days past, they disagreed as to methods or details, there was no hint of friction. Thus, in the negotiations with Orlando regarding Fiume, the President wrote to House: You are doing such fine, patient work to help smooth out difficulties that it is very hard not to go the full length with you in concessions. . . . I cannot in conscience concur. . . . Affectionately yours. From first to last, during the Paris days, the tone of the President's notes was the same. There is no date at which a change can be observed. He signed himself invariably, 'Affectionately yours,' or simply, 'Aff'y.' [1]

The same is true of the summer following the Conference, after the two parted at Paris on June 28, never to meet again. The cables exchanged while House was reporting on his work at London are cast in exactly the same tone as their earlier correspondence. The President writes: I am glad your letters have begun to come. . . . I am very well satisfied with the mandates you have sent me. . . . I am very glad indeed. . . . I am delighted. . . . Thank you for sending me . . . I am heartily glad you liked the address. . . .[2] He signs himself 'affectionately' and he adds a personal message: I hope that you and the family keep well. We are going through a tremendous storm of all sorts of difficulties here, but the ship is steady and the officers not dismayed. We unite in the warmest messages.[3] This last is written on August 15, 1919, and certainly indicates no breach in the President's affection.

At the end of August the newspapers published the story of a personal break between Wilson and House. Their relations were such that, as good friends will, they referred to it frankly. House wrote as follows to the President and later cabled a reference to it.

[1] Wilson to House, May 13, May 14, May 19, May 24, June 5, June 7, June 27, 1919.

[2] Wilson to House, July 3, July 9, July 18, August 23, August 29, 1919.

[3] Wilson to House, August 15, 1919.

Colonel House to President Wilson

LONDON, *August* 26, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Our annual falling out seems to have occurred. The Foreign Office received a cable the other day saying that we were no longer on good terms and asking that the Prime Minister and Balfour be informed. The Press representatives also told me that they had the same news. I am wondering where this particular story originated and why they wanted the Prime Minister and Balfour to be informed. Tyrrell said it came from one of their men in New York and not from Washington.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson cabled to Colonel House on August 29, through the American Embassy, a message of which the following is the paraphrase:

Am deeply distressed by malicious story about break between us and thank you for the whole message about it. The best way to treat it is with silent contempt.[1]

It happened that Sir William Wiseman had an informal conversation with the President at this time. The record which he made furnishes interesting evidence of Mr. Wilson's feeling toward House and also of his physical and nervous condition at the moment he started on his Western trip:[2]

'I lunched at the White House a few days before Wilson started on his ill-fated tour. The President was cordial as ever. I was, however, shocked by his appearance. He was

[1] Wilson to House, August 29, 1919.

[2] Sir William Wiseman to C. S., July 3, 1928.

obviously a sick man. His face was drawn and of a grey color, and frequently twitching in a pitiful effort to control nerves which had broken down under the burden of the world's distress. I had come to tell of the progress of League affairs in Europe, and how much Grey and Tyrrell were looking forward to seeing him in Washington. . . .

'In my notes of the conversation, I find this remark of Wilson's: "I ask nothing better than to lay my case before the American people." We naturally talked a lot about Colonel House, and the President spoke of him most affectionately, and I find this recorded: "Colonel House," I remarked, "is trusted by all the statesmen in Europe." "And rightly," said the President, "for he is trustworthy."

'The President retired directly after lunch, and bade me good-bye most kindly. I never saw him again. The doctors were urging him to abandon his speaking tour, and had warned him of the danger, the almost certainty of a breakdown, but he was convinced that it was his duty to lay his case before the American people, and nothing would deter him.'

Four days after sending his last cable to House, President Wilson left on the Western tour which ended in his collapse. He was travelling every day, speaking every night; there was no opportunity for him to write the Colonel.

During the month of October both men were ill. But the question arises why, after House regained his health, was he not called down to the sick man in Washington? House's papers show that he expected such a call. They also show that he realized how ill the President was and felt that in view of his condition he could not go down without a special summons. But there is nothing to show why the call never came.

What is certain is that there was never anything approaching a quarrel between the two. On three occasions after the

TO American Embassy, London.

FROM Department of State, signed 'LANSING'.

DATED August 29, 3 p.m.

RECEIVED August 30, 5:21 a.m.

NUMBER 5896

Your 2914, August 29, 11 a.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT TO COLONEL HOUSE:

"Am deeply distressed by malicious story about break between us and thank you for the whole message about it.

The best way to treat it is with silent contempt."

MR. MARTIN.

Copy sent to Colonel House.

WILSON'S CABLE OF AUGUST 29, 1919

defeat of the Treaty, Colonel House received notes from President Wilson, in answer to those in which the Colonel sent him good wishes and hopes for restoration of his health: on March 11, 1920, June 10, 1920, November 1, 1920. In each of these the President's tone was friendly: Thank you for your letter. . . . I am hoping that you and Mrs. House and all of yours are well. . . .[1] I am glad you are going to have the refreshment of a trip across the water . . . hope you will find every sort of satisfaction . . . with best wishes. . . .[2] I appreciate your thought of me. . . .[3] But the letters were signed 'faithfully yours' or 'sincerely yours,' and not 'affectionately.'

Thus the friendship lapsed. It was not broken. The dramatic quality of the extraordinary partnership which had carried the two men through so many historic crises together is heightened rather than lessened because its close cannot be adequately explained. 'The world will go on guessing,' wrote Sir Horace Plunkett,[4] 'but the nobler hypothesis will stand. Through the "mystery" House bequeaths to posterity, one certainty will gleam. That a friendship which had stood so many, so varied and so trying tests, should have failed through a weakening on either side to bring forth its final fruit is unthinkable. It was born late, but lived the fullest life. When stricken by sickness it could not function; but it did not die.'

V

'There were many doors,' wrote House on April 20, 1928,[5] 'in the temples that men of old reared to their gods, to the sun, to the moon, to the mythical deities, Isis, Jupiter, Mars. Behind the innermost door dwelt the mysteries.

[1] Wilson to House, March 11, 1920.
[2] Wilson to House, June 10, 1920.
[3] Wilson to House, November 1, 1920.
[4] Sir Horace Plunkett to C. S., July 6, 1928.
[5] In a letter to C. S.

'And now you, who have had access to my most intimate papers, ask me to unlock the innermost door, a door to which I have no key. My separation from Woodrow Wilson was and is to me a tragic mystery, a mystery that now can never be dispelled, for its explanation lies buried with him. Theories I have, and theories they must remain. These you know.

'Never, during the years we worked together, was there an unkind or impatient word, written or spoken, and this, to me, is an abiding consolation.

'While our friendship was not of long duration it was as close as human friendships grow to be. To this his letters, and mine, bear silent testimony. Until a shadow fell between us I never had a more considerate friend, and my devotion to his memory remains and will remain unchanged.'

THE END

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